ACADEMY CLASSICS
MERCHANT
OF
VENICE
SHAKESPEARE

Charles J. Cuddy
St. Charles College

Shakespeare: Born April 23, 1564
Died April 23, 1616

Mother: Mary Arden

Father: John, was an ordinary person.

Married: 1582 to Anne Hathaway

Reasons for leaving Stratford:-
1. To seek his fortune.
2. To be an actor
} 21 yrs. old. - 1585.

He became connected with a theatre either as a call boy or a minor hand.

First six years in London is a blank

Became an actor before he wrote plays.

He comes on scene for an attack made on him by an author twenty ~~eight~~ nine yrs. old at the time 1593

Finally comes on scene when scene in 1594 when he wrote Venus and Adonis, Lucrece.

Shakespeare gave notice to him as an author.

His fame increased very rapidly with eight years.

Merchant of Venice - before 1595.
because a list of his works was published by.

By 1612 he published more than 20 dramas.

As popularity increased as an actor he ~~was~~ lost interest in acting.

He disappeared from stage 1604.

He was looked upon as a man of means and standing & was a friend of greater men of his days. Ben Jonson for example.

He visited and bought property in Stratford.

He probably broke off from London in 1612 or before and went back to Stratford.

Religion: It is not known.
But he refers to the Catholic religion in his plays.
It is possible that he was but not probable.
There is no spiritual tone to his poems.
Not a big knowledge of Catholic doctrine.
Some say he was converted

From the painting by Sir John Everett Millais in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

PORTIA

Her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece.

—Act I. Scene 1.

The Academy Classics

SHAKESPEARE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED WITH A LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE, AN ACCOUNT OF THE THEATRE IN HIS TIME, AND NUMEROUS AIDS TO THE STUDY OF THE PLAY

BY

SAMUEL THURBER, JR.

NEWTON HIGH SCHOOL

ALLYN AND BACON

Boston New York Chicago

COPYRIGHT, 1917, BY
SAMUEL THURBER, JR.

DAAP

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

FOREWORD

In revising my father's edition of the Merchant of Venice, I have been influenced by the changed condition in high schools since the time when his work was done. The greater number of pupils, the consequent inadequacy of reference material, the more general and less specialized literary preparation, and the broader aims and ideals of the rising generation — all these conditions demand a different type of annotation from that of twenty years ago.

My own recent problems in teaching the Merchant of Venice with college preparatory, commercial, and technical classes have led me to include in the present edition the following eight features not found in my father's work: a fuller and more informational array of notes; a study of the structural elements of the play; a discussion of the sources and historical setting of the comedy; glimpses of life in Shakespeare's time as shown by the play; comments of well-known persons on the characters of the drama; a list of familiar quotations from the Merchant; an account of Shakespeare, the man, — his life, work, reputation, and the theatre for which he wrote; and finally a list of topics for oral and written composition. These eight features will be found in the appendix following the text of the play.

It is hoped that this additional material will not only increase the interest and inspiration of the student, but that it will also lighten the labor of the teacher.

SAMUEL THURBER, Jr.

CONTENTS

PAGE

List of Illustrations vii

Milton's "Shakespeare" viii

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE 1

Appendix

The Writing and Publication of The Merchant of Venice . 91

Stories which Shakespeare used in The Merchant of Venice 95

Time Duration of The Merchant of Venice . . . 106

Comments upon the Characters 111

Glimpses of Life in Shakespeare's Time found in The Merchant of Venice 123

Familiar Passages in The Merchant of Venice . . . 124

What we know about Shakespeare 127

Shakespeare's Plays and Poems 140

Shakespeare's Popularity in His Own Day . . . 154

Shakespeare's Fame since His Death 159

The Theatre of Shakespeare's Day 168

Books of Interest to Students of Shakespeare . . . 190

Explanatory Notes 193

Subjects for Oral and Written Composition . . . 284

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
Portia	*Frontispiece*
Shylock and Jessica	30
The Casket Scene	50
The Trial Scene	74
Shakespeare's House at Stratford-on-Avon	130
The Room where Shakespeare was Born	130
Anne Hathaway's Cottage at Shottery	132
Interior of Anne Hathaway's Cottage	132
Holy Trinity Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon	138
Inscription on Shakespeare's Tomb	138
Inscription on Shakespeare's Monument, Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon	138
The Globe Theatre	176
Interior of an Elizabethan Theatre	176

SHAKESPEARE

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones
The labor of an age in piléd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.
For whilst to the shame of slow-endeavoring art
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And, so sepúlchred, in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

JOHN MILTON.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Duke of Venice.
The Prince of Morocco, } suitors to
The Prince of Arragon, } Portia.
Antonio, a merchant of Venice.
Bassanio, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.
Salanio, }
Salarino, } friends to Antonio and
Gratiano, } Bassanio.
Salerio, }
Lorenzo, in love with Jessica.
Shylock, a rich Jew.
Tubal, a Jew, his friend.
Launcelot Gobbo, the clown, servant to Shylock.
Old Gobbo, father to Launcelot.
Leonardo, servant to Bassanio.
Balthasar, } servants to Portia.
Stephano, }
Portia, a rich heiress.
Nerissa, her waiting-maid.
Jessica, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

Scene: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

ACT I.

Scene I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter Antonio, Salarino, *and* Salanio.

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,

Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.
Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.
Salar. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.
Salar. Why, then you are in love.
Ant. Fie, fie!
Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stayed till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.
Bass. I will not fail you.
Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say "I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gra. Thanks i'faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honor, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advisèd watch,
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost

Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.
Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renownéd suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!
Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word "choose!" I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold,

silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come? 33

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse: and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. 41

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say, "If you will not have me, choose:" he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two! 49

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him. 60

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behavior everywhere.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?

Por. That he hath a neighborly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets. 98

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure. 104

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar, and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called. 109

Ner. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise. 114

Enter a Serving-man.

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night. 119

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and

the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III. *Venice. A public place.*

Enter Bassanio *and* Shylock.

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months; well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bass. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the

peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Curséd be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross

Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.
Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possessed
How much ye would?
Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Ant. And for three months.
Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.
Ant. I do never use it.
Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—
Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But swayed and fashioned by the hand of heaven.

Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.
Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!
Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate —
Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?
Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say,
"Shylock, we would have moneys:" you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
"Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,

Say this;
"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
You spurned me such a day; another time
You called me dog; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?"
Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.
Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.
Bass. This were kindness.
Shy. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.
Ant. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.
Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.
Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favor, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.
Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*
The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.
Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.
Ant. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

Scene I. *Belmont. A room in* Portia's *house.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco *and his train;* Portia, Nerissa, *and others attending.*

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspéct of mine
Hath feared the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renownéd prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince

That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to chose at all,
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong,
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

Scene II. *Venice. A street.*

Enter Launcelot.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me, saying to me "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My

conscience says, "No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: "Via!" says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son," or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says, "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well;" "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well:" to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run. 29

Enter Old Gobbo, *with a basket.*

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to Master Jew's? 36

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? [*Aside*] Mark me now; now I will raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

Laun. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father,

I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other followers.*

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit a Servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify —

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve, —

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify —

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins —

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you —

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is —

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man;

and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtained thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferred thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.*

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestowed,

Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteemed acquaintance: hie thee, go.
Leon. My best endeavors shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Where is your master?
Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*
Gra. Signior Bassanio!
Bass. Gratiano!
Gra. I have a suit to you.
Bass. You have obtained it.
Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior
I be miscónstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.
Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say "amen,"
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. A room in* SHYLOCK'S *house.*

Enter JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper thou shalt see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! But, adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit: adieu.

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,

If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [*Exit*

SCENE IV. *The same. A street.*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately.
Go, gentlemen, [*Exit Launcelot.*
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.
Salan. And so will I.
Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.
Salar. 'Tis good we do so.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
Lor. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnished with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V. *The same. Before* Shylock's *house.*

Enter Shylock *and* Launcelot.

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:—
What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandize,
As thou hast done with me:—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—
Why, Jessica, I say!
Laun. Why, Jessica!
Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.
Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA.

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. An they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:
Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-necked fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces,
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit.*

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

Jes. His words were, "Farewell mistress;" nothing else.

Shy. The patch is kind enough but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrowed purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*

Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

Scene VI. *The same.*

Enter Gratiano *and* Salarino, *masqued.*

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salar. His hour is almost past.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obligéd faith unforfeited!

Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast

From the painting by Sir J. D. Linton.

SHYLOCK AND JESSICA

Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest.
— Act II. Scene 5.

With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chaséd than enjoyed.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarféd bark puts from her native bay,
Hugged and embracéd by the wanton wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weathered ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggared by the wanton wind!

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, *above, in boy's clothes.*

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:

But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[*Exit above.*

Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall be placèd in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, *below.*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino*

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Who's there?

Gra. Signior Antonio!

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, *with the* PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *and their trains.*

Por. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.

Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;"
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Mor. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all

Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculped upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told.
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Cold, indeed; and labor lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
[*Exit with his train.* *Flourish of cornets.*

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. *Venice. A street.*

Enter SALARINO *and* SALANIO.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
A sealéd bag, two sealéd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."
Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.
Salar. Marry, well remembered.

I reasoned with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught:
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wished in silence that it were not his.

Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answered, "Do not so;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there:"
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embracéd heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter NERISSA *with a* Servitor.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains.*

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
If you choose that wherein I am contained,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
Ar. I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
Ar. And so have I addressed me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

What many men desire! that "many" may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:"
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservéd dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
From the true seed of honor! and how much honor
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new varnished! Well, but to my choice:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposéd natures.

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silvered o'er; and so was this.
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose,

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeared
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

Scene I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter Salanio *and* Salarino.

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as

ever knapped ginger or made her neighbors believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, —O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!— 14

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say "amen" betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew. 21

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal. 26

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damned for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge. 3

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salan. Out upon it, old carrion!

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no? 39

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salanio, Salarino, and Servant.*

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants.

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well,—

And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlooked me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Por. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforcéd do speak anything.

Bass. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Por. Well then, confess and live.

Bass. "Confess" and "love"
Had been the very sum of my confession:
O happy torment, when my torturer

Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
Por. Away, then! I am locked in one of them:
If you do love me you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose; he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
And what is music then? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crownéd monarch: such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With blearéd visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourishéd?
Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnéd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valor's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crispéd snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposéd fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiléd shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf

Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Por. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love,
Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here? [*Opening the leaden casket.*
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes,—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnished. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow

In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

[*Reads*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true!
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account; but the full sum of me

From the painting of Ferdinand Barth.

THE CASKET SCENE

Is sum of — something, which to term in gross,
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words;
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a belovéd prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleaséd multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Expressed and not expressed. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,

And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins: I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?
Have all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?
Saler. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,

If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.
Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.
Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?
Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honor more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
Por. What sum owes he the Jew?
Bass. For me three thousand ducats.
Por. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!

I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honors mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved: for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honored in your marriage.

Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, *and* Salerio, *a Messenger from Venice.*

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here

Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lor. I thank your honor. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Saler. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives Bassanio a letter.*

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the color from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,

For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste: but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

Scene III. *Venice. A street.*

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, *and* Gaoler.

Shy. Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Gaoler, look to him.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou calledst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond. [*Exit.*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Ant. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft delivered from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.
Salar. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state;
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR.

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honor,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.
Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestowed
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself;
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow

To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition;
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

Lor. Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.

[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*

Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavor of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [*Exit.*

Por. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand

That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

Ner. Shall they see us?

Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplishéd
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honorable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not killed them;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. A garden.*

Enter LAUNCELOT *and* JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I

promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

Jes. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

Lor. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only "cover" is the word.

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

Lor. Yet more quarreling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humors and conceits shall govern. [*Exit.*

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnished like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawned with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lor. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.
Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.
Jes. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

Scene I. *Venice. A court of justice.*

Enter the Duke, *the* Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salerio, *and others*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?
Ant. Ready, so please your grace.
Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdúrate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.
Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.
Saler. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possessed your grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
But, say, it is my humor: is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats

To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
For affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rendered,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?
Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?
Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,

Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.
Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.
Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.
Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?
Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be seasoned with such viands? You will answer,
"The slaves are ours:" so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement: answer; shall I have it?
Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learnéd doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.
Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.
Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a lawyer's clerk.*

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?
Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.
[*Presenting a letter.*
Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.
Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Gra. O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Governed a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learnéd doctor to our court.
Where is he?

Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

Clerk. [*Reads*] Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, *dressed like a doctor of laws.*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informéd throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The thronéd monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;

And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.
Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
Take thrice the money; bid me tear the bond.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenor.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.
Por. Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart:" those are the very words.
Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so expressed: but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Ant. But little: I am armed and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honorable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;
And when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife and all the world,
Are not with me esteemed above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.
Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.
Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.
Shy. [*Aside*] These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!—
We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. Most rightful judge!
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.
Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!
Por. Tarry a little; there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh:"
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.
Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!
Shy. Is that the law?
Por. Thyself shall see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!
Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.
Bass. Here is the money.
Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.
Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.
Por. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.
Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.
Por. Tarry, Jew:

From the painting of A. Schmitz.

THE TRIAL SCENE

If thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice. — Act IV. Scene I

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hanged at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?
Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.
Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter:
Two things provided more, that, for this favor,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.
Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronouncéd here.
Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?
Shy. I am content.
Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.
Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.
Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.
Gra. In christening thou shalt have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.
[*Exit Shylock.*
Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.
Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.
Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.

Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Bass.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answered.

Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy forever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.

[*Exit Gratiano.*

Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt*

Scene II. *The same. A street.*

Enter Portia *and* Nerissa.

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
Por. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.
Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Por.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep forever.
Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter LORENZO *and* JESSICA.

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls

And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.
Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismayed away.
Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.
Jes. In such a night
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.
Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.
Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
Jes. I would out-night you, did nobody come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

Steph. Stephano is my name: and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
Lor. Who comes with her?
Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid
I pray you, is my master yet returned?
Lor. He is not, nor have we not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!
Lor. Who calls?
Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!
Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.
Laun. Sola! where? where?
Lor. Here.
Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*
Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.
[*Exit Stephano.*

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods:
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,

Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.
Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!
Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.
Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season seasoned are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*
Lor. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they returned?
Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket sounds.*
Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.
Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their followers.*

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.
Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.
Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.
Por. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?
Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me, and leave me not."
Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on 's face that had it.
Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbéd boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begged it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.
Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger

And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

Bass. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begged it and indeed
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begged mine
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honor to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honor, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begged the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffered him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honor would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blesséd candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begged
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him any thing I have.

Ner. Nor I his clerk; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gra. Well, do you so: let not me take him, then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforcéd wrong
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself —

Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Por. You are all amazed:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now returned; I have not yet
Entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome,
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;

There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbor suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancéd on this letter.
Ant. I am dumb.
Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?
Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.
Por. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.
Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possessed of.
Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvéd people.
Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.
Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

A LIST OF THE PERSONS OF THE DRAMA, WITH THE SCENES IN WHICH THEY APPEAR.

Antonio	I, 1, 3; II, 6; III, 3; IV, 1; V, 1.
Salarino	I, 1; II, 4, 6, 8; III, 1, 3.
Salanio	I, 1; II, 3, 8; III, 1.
Bassanio	I, 1, 3; II, 1; III, 2; IV, 1; V, 1.
Lorenzo	I, 1; II, 4, 6; III, 2, 4, 5; V, 1.
Gratiano	I, 1; II, 2, 4, 6; III, 2; IV, 1, 2; V, 1
Servant	I, 2; II, 9; III, 1.
Shylock	I, 3; II, 5; III, 1, 3; IV, 1.
Morocco	II, 1, 7.
Launcelot	II, 2, 3, 4, 5; III, 5; V, 1.
Old Gobbo	II, 2.
Leonardo	II, 2.
Arragon	II, 9.
Tubal	III, 1.
Musician	III, 2.
Salerio	III, 2; IV, 1.
Balthasar	III, 4.
Duke	IV, 1.
Stephano	V, 1.
Portia	I, 2; II, 1, 7, 9; III, 2, 4; IV, 1, 2; V, 1
Nerissa	I, 2; II, 9; III, 2, 4; IV, 1, 2; V, 1.
Jessica	II, 3, 6, 7; III, 2, 4, 5; V, 1.

APPENDIX, NOTES, AND SUBJECTS FOR COMPOSITION

APPENDIX

THE WRITING AND PUBLICATION OF THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Shakespeare produced his plays and poems during a period of about twenty years, which is almost equally divided by the close of the 16th century. "The Merchant of Venice" may be assigned to the middle of the first half of this period, and is therefore to be considered as one of the poet's earlier, but not earliest, dramas. It had been preceded by nearly all his inferior comedies, and also by "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The inferior histories had already appeared, and with them "King John" and "Richard III." But all the greatest comedies, the greatest histories, and all the tragedies, with the exception of "Romeo and Juliet," were yet to be written.

The place of "The Merchant of Venice" in Shakespeare's works.

As is the case with many of Shakespeare's plays, we find an early record of "The Merchant of Venice" in the Register of the Stationers' Company. This famous old organization, incorporated in 1556, for nearly three hundred years regulated the publication of books in England. In fact, it was the official method, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, of granting a license to a publisher. On its records we find this interesting entry for July 22, 1598:—"A booke of the Marchaunt of Venyse, or otherwise called

The first license to print "The Merchant of Venice."

the Jewe of Venyse. Provided that yt bee not prynted by the said James Robertes, or anye other whatsoever, without lycence first had from the right honourable the Lord Chamberlain." Now we know that Shakespeare belonged to the company of players called the Lord Chamberlain's Servants, and for them he wrote some of his earlier comedies. Therefore when James Roberts secured a license to print "The Merchant of Venice," the managers of this company hastened to have an order added prohibiting its publication until their patron, who was a powerful noble, should give his permission. Such restrictions, or orders "to be stayed," as they were called, were not uncommon in Shakespeare's time. If a drama was still popular on the stage, actors, manager, and author did their best to keep it out of print, evidently fearing that the play in book form would hurt attendance at the theatre.

Two years passed before permission was granted to issue "The Merchant of Venice." On October 28, 1600, it was again entered on the Stationers' Register, and a few weeks later it was published by Thomas Heyes with this elaborate title-page.

The first editions of "The Merchant of Venice."

The most excellent
Historie of the *Merchant*
of Venice.
With the extreame crueltie of *Shylocke* the Iewe
towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a iust pound
of his flesh: and the obtayning of *Portia*
by the choyse of three
chests. *As it hath beene divers times acted*
by the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants.

Written by William Shakespeare,

AT LONDON,

Printed by I. R., for Thomas Heyes
and are to be sold in Paules Church-yard, at the
signe of the Greene Dragon.

1600.

In the same year James Roberts issued another edition with a title-page somewhat different, but none the less quaint. These were both thin, paper-bound pamphlets called "Quartos."

As far as we know, "The Merchant of Venice" was not printed again in the poet's life-time. It next appeared in the Folio of 1623 (see page 141), where it was published with the rest of his plays by his two friends and fellow-actors, Heminge and Condell. Here it stands in the ninth place, between two others of the dramatist's most charming comedies, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "As You Like It." It is very evidently a reprint, with some alterations, of the quarto issued by Heyes in 1600.

Its place in the First Folio.

How long before the Stationers' entry of 1598 Shakespeare wrote "The Merchant of Venice" no one can tell with absolute certainty. The precise date of composition of the poet's works has always been a puzzling problem to scholars. Every bit of evidence has been weighed and discussed, and yet this play has been assigned by different critics to all of the years between 1592 and 1598. However, that it could not have been written later than the end of 1597 seems certain from two bits of external

When Shakespeare wrote the play.

evidence. First, there is the entry in the Stationers' Register of July, 1598. Then earlier in the same year Francis Meres published his "Palladis Tamia," or "Wit's Treasury," in which he mentions six comedies of Shakespeare that entitle him to rank with the Roman Plautus. The last of these six is "The Merchant of Venice." Those who place the date of composition earlier than 1594 base their argument chiefly upon a reference in the account-book of Philip Henslowe, under date of August 25, 1594, to the performance of a new play, the "Venesyon Comodey." There is no proof, however, that this was Shakespeare's work. As a matter of fact, both in style and construction "The Merchant" much more closely resembles "As You Like it" and "Twelfth Night" than it does the earlier comedies. By the last years of the 16th century the poet had overcome the faults of his apprenticeship work. He had finally settled the metric forms which he was to use during the course of his poetic activity. He had learned how to adapt plays to the stage so as to touch the imagination of spectators. He had mastered the art of portraying character, and he had developed, — though he was to develop still further, — that wonderful diction which made him the supreme poet of the English language. These later developments of meter, imaginative force, character-drawing, and poetic diction all appear in "The Merchant of Venice," so that it seems safe to assign it to the year 1597, or 1596 at the very earliest.

STORIES WHICH SHAKESPEARE USED IN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Young persons studying a Shakespearian play for the first time are often surprised, and sometimes even distressed, to learn that the stories of the dramatist's works were not original with him. Originality of plot seems to them the chief requisite of greatness; a worker in second-hand material falls under their scorn; they begin to wonder just why this borrower of other men's ideas has been rated so highly and so profoundly admired by their elders. This is not strange. Action, movement, complication of events,—all that goes to make up a plot,—is interesting and therefore important to boys and girls. They are naturally more concerned with what the hero *does*, than how he does it, or how he talks, or what he is like. Moreover, in our novel-reading, inventive age,—in our age of "movies" and of everything new and startling,—it is not surprising that false values are given to things just because they are original. It is difficult even for mature people to see that originality of plot in story or play is really the least important element in the final test of its worth. They must be reminded that any one with a little clever inventiveness can work out a complicated and entirely new series of events. Thousands of short stories and novels appear every year in our magazines with plots that are skilfully woven and often remarkably original. Beyond that they have nothing to recommend them, so that after a moment's curiosity to see "how they come out," they are completely neglected and soon forgotten. The fact that

Originality of plot unimportant.

in plot and action they are "something new" and clever gives them no claim whatsoever to the enduring fame of literature.

It is therefore not a sign of weakness or of a shallow mind to find Shakespeare making use of material already at his disposal. On the contrary, it is evidence of wisdom and good judgment. He was above bothering his head with new plots to amuse his audiences. All his mind and skill and strength were needed for more essential things. Old plays, Italian novels, Plutarch's Lives, chronicles of English history, furnished him with incidents and characters with which to work. The best elements of these he skilfully chose, made over, and combined; but next to nothing did he himself invent. The force of his wonderful genius was spent in drawing character so clearly and so true to human nature that the men and women of his plays became distinct personalities that have lived now for three hundred years in the hearts of the people. Falstaff, Portia, Shylock, Rosalind, Hamlet, Desdemona, Macbeth, Juliet, Lear, — these are as real as any who have lived in the annals of history. Then again, the language and the poetry of the plays, the sentiments, the wit, and above all the artistic blending of thought and character and action, are his and his alone. The sources of the stories which Shakespeare used no one ever reads. They are commonplace, flat, and unworthy of our interest. Yet these same stories remoulded, polished, and filled with the inspiration of Shakespeare's genius, have become masterpieces of literature.

Shakespeare not a writer of original stories.

It is well that Shakespeare was not attracted to the inventing of elaborate and original plots, for he must have

been busy enough as it was. In their demand for novelty in stage attractions audiences then required a new play, on an average, every sixteen or seventeen days. Intense rivalry existed between the various companies of actors. In their struggle for popularity, which meant their daily bread, playwrights turned off their work with astonishing rapidity. Thus in the twenty years of his London activity Shakespeare wrote, in whole or in part, about forty plays. "Driven by the necessity of speed on the one hand, and by anxiety to catch the popular fancy on the other, is it any wonder that he never stopped to devise a plot? What need was there that he should do so? The manager of the company had many an old play which, at one time or another, had been submitted to the test of public approval. . . To such plays, if selected for revision, a certain amount of popularity was thus assured in advance; and as for the plot, — the barest skeleton sufficed for Shakespeare. He knew that he could remodel it into fair proportions and relume it with life. Of all that goes to make up one of his dramas, the plot in itself, in its mere outlines, is of less importance than any other element in it. Of course, in the nature of things, it is not to be supposed that after he had selected the old play to be rejuvenated he either adhered to it closely, or refused hints from other sources. Old ballads, books of travels, histories, the gossip of the day, — all were put under contribution. As Emerson says: 'Every master has found his materials collected, and his power lay in his sympathy with his people, and in his love for the materials he wrought in.'"[1]

Advantages of using old material for plays.

[1] Dr. H. H. Furness: New Variorum Edition, "Merchant of Venice."

Appendix.

Sources of the two stories in "The Merchant of Venice."

The two stories that lie at the foundation of "The Merchant of Venice," — the story of the caskets and the story of the pound of flesh, — had long existed in European fiction. From time to time they had been retold by various authors in Italy and in the East until, as Dr. Hudson says, "Shakespeare spoilt them for further use." Both of them are found in the "Gesta Romanorum," or "Deeds of the Romans," an old collection of tales and fables which had been translated from the original Latin into English long before the poet's time. It is possible that Shakespeare made use of this book when writing his play, though it seems more likely that he had in mind the incidents as they were told in a collection of stories by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, known as "Il Pecorone."

This was first published at Venice in 1558. The translations of Italian novels, which flooded England at this time, were favorite sources of plots with Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists. It is probable, therefore, that he had read "Il Pecorone" in an English version and used it freely when constructing "The Merchant of Venice."

The story in "Il Pecorone."

The story according to Ser Giovanni Fiorentino is briefly as follows: There is living "at Belmonte" a beautiful and rich young lady who is to be won only under certain peculiar and very difficult conditions. A young adventurer, Giannetto by name, falls in love with her, and after two voyages to Belmonte, and two fruitless attempts to win her, he is befriended by her maid, — the Nerissa of our play, — and at last is successful in meeting the test. Then with rejoicing and merry-making he is married to the beautiful heiress.

Meanwhile his godfather, Ansaldo, who is a wealthy merchant of Venice, in order to fit out a ship for the third voyage of his young friend, has borrowed ten thousand ducats of a Jew and bound himself to sacrifice a pound of his flesh if he does not repay the money at a certain time specified in the bond. Now in the happiness of his marriage Giannetto forgets all about Ansaldo, and is only accidentally reminded of his good friend's plight just a day before the bond is due. The Jew is about to cut the pound of flesh when Ansaldo is saved from the cruel miser by Giannetto's bride, who, disguised as a lawyer, arrives in Venice just in time for the trial. By the same tricks which Portia uses she turns the scales of justice in favor of the merchant. On her return to Belmonte the next day she discloses her part in the proceedings by showing her husband a ring which she had persuaded him to give her as a reward at the close of the trial.

The similarity of this old Italian tale to the main plot of Shakespeare's comedy is indeed striking. The principal change made by the poet is in the method by which Portia is won, for the test that Giannetto had to meet in "Il Pecorone" was impossible to use on the stage. The substitution which he made can be clearly traced to the story of Anselm, Emperor of Rome, in the "Gesta Romanorum." The only son of the emperor has been betrothed to the beautiful daughter of the King of Naples, but the ship which is conveying the princess to Rome is wrecked in a fearful storm and all on board except the maiden are drowned. While she is in the water and about to perish, like Jonah in the old story she is swallowed by a huge whale. Fortunately she is armed with a short dagger,

The story of the caskets in the "Gesta Romanorum."

which she uses so effectively that the monster in agony makes for the shore. There he is slain by a knight who rescues the princess and conducts her at once to the Emperor. So far there is little in the fable that a dramatist could use on the stage. But when the Emperor wishes to put the young lady to a test to make sure that she is really of noble blood and not a common adventuress, he sets before her three vessels, or chests, — one of gold, one of silver, and one of lead. On the first is written these words: "Whoso chooseth me shall find what he deserveth." It is a beautiful casket, set with precious jewels, "fair and rich to look upon," but inside it contains only dead men's bones. On the second is inscribed the motto: "Whoso chooseth me shall find what his nature desireth." The silver of this vessel is cunningly wrought with glittering figures, yet it is filled with earth and worms. On the third, which is of dull and unattractive lead, are the words: "Whoso chooseth me shall find what God has disposed to him." Then the Emperor says to the princess: "Choose thou, fair lady, among these several caskets. If thou tak'st that one that will profit both thyself and others, then shalt thou wed my son." Carefully she examines the chests, and thoughtfully weighs the meaning of the mottoes. At last she chooses the leaden casket, whereupon she is married to the prince with pomp and ceremony and great rejoicing. Here, then, is the story which, with some slight alterations, Shakespeare added to the tale of Giannetto, Ansaldo, and the pound of flesh to make his "Merchant of Venice."

There were undoubtedly other stories, and other forms of these two fables, which Shakespeare knew and consciously or unconsciously used when writing his comedy.

For instance, it has been suggested that the part of Jessica, and her elopement with the Christian Lorenzo, come from another Italian novel by one Massuccio di Salerno. Moreover, there is an old ballad, of uncertain date, that may have contributed something. It is entitled "The Cruelty of Gernutus, a Jew, who, lending to a Merchant a hundred Crowns, would have a pound of flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed." It is too long and not of sufficient interest to give here in full; but a few stanzas will serve to show that either the ballad was written by one who knew the play, or, what is more probable, that Shakespeare had read the poem so recently that a few of its phrases stuck in his mind and were used unconsciously by him in his drama.

Other sources of the play: the ballad of "Gernutus."

No penny for the loan of it
For one year you shall pay:
You may do me as good a turn,
Before my dying day.

But we will have *a merry jest*
For to be talkèd long:
You shall make me a bond, quoth he,
That shall be large and strong.

And this shall be the forfeiture, —
Of your own flesh a pound:
If you agree, make you the bond,
And here is a hundred crowns.

* * * * *

Some offer'd for his hundred crowns
Five hundred for to pay;

And some a thousand, two, or three,
Yet still he did denay.

And, at the last, ten thousand crowns
They offer'd, him to save:
Gernutus said, I will no gold, —
My forfeit I will have.

The bloody Jew now ready is,
With whetted blade in hand,
To spoil the blood of innocent,
By forfeit of his bond.

And, as he was about to strike
In him the deadly blow,
Stay, quoth the judge, thy cruelty, —
I charge thee to do so.

Sith needs thou wilt thy forfeit have,
Which is of flesh a pound,
See that thou shed no drop of blood,
Nor yet the man confound.

Another source that may have supplied Shakespeare with a hint or two is Marlowe's "Jew of Malta." This bloody tragedy, though acted as early as 1590, was still a popular play on the stage when "The Merchant" was being written. That the two men were close friends, and that Marlowe influenced Shakespeare's style, we know. The similarity of certain passages in the two plays seems to show that the great poet quite consciously made use of his fellow dramatist's work. The resemblances, however, are slight. To be sure, the chief characters of each

Suggestions taken from Marlowe's "Jew of Malta."

are Jews who are usurers and misers. Each is a widower with a single daughter who becomes a Christian. But here the similarity ends. "Shylock," writes Charles Lamb, "in the midst of his savage purpose is a man. His motives, feelings, resentments, have something human in them. 'If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?' Barabas is a mere monster, brought in with a large, painted nose to please the rabble. He kills in sport, poisons whole nunneries, invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as, a century or two earlier, might have been played before the Londoners by the Royal Command, when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been resolved on by the Cabinet."

The famous passage in "The Jew of Malta," which Shakespeare must have had in mind when writing Act II, Scene 8 of "The Merchant," is given in full on page 234.

Dr. Lopez and Shylock.

The poet may have gained still further inspiration for his Shylock from the character and tragic experiences of one of the chief London physicians of his time. Dr. Lopez, a wealthy Spanish Jew, was hanged in 1594 on the charge of plotting to poison Queen Elizabeth. The trial and execution of this foreigner, who was supposed to be in the employment of England's arch enemy, King Philip of Spain, aroused the populace to a frenzy of hatred against the Jews. A wide-awake dramatist like Shakespeare, in his effort to appeal to the people, would naturally portray on the stage some of the characteristics of this Spanish physician. Popular prejudice and passion demanded that Jews be pictured as cruel, miserly, and blood-thirsty villains. Undoubtedly Shylock reminded the audience most forcibly of the hated Dr. Lopez, especially when we remember that one of the

charges against him was an attempt to poison not only the Queen, but a certain Portuguese gentleman living in London whose name was *Antonio*.

Possible influence of an earlier play, "The Jew."

Sixteen or seventeen years before Shakespeare wrote "The Merchant of Venice," — in 1579, to be exact, — an Oxford student, Stephen Gosson by name, published a book called "The Schoole of Abuse," in which he bitterly attacks the poets and playwrights of his time. In the course of his tirade he mentions a few plays that are worthy of praise, among them "*The Jew* . . . shown at the Bull . . . representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers." If these words refer to the stories of the caskets and the pound of flesh, then it seems that the old legends of "Il Pecorone" and the "Gesta Romanorum" had been combined and worked up into dramatic form long before Shakespeare thought of "The Merchant of Venice." Furthermore, he may have used this old play, "The Jew," and not the Italian novels as the foundation of his comedy. Indeed, this is highly probable. Retouching and making over old plays was then a common practice. Shakespeare's intimate relations with the theatre as an actor would give him access to many of these earlier works in their manuscript form. As a matter of fact, several of his very greatest plays have been traced to dramatic compositions of preceding years. No copy, however, of "The Jew" has ever been found; so that we shall never know how far Shakespeare adapted the Italian tales to his own use, or how far the material had already been worked over and arranged by an unknown earlier dramatist.

What, then, is left of "The Merchant of Venice" that

we may safely attribute to Shakespeare? Of the plot there seems to be very little. Morocco, Arragon, Launcelot and his father, Gratiano, — these, to be sure, are his creation; and so is everything in the play that makes it a work of art and a masterpiece of literature. The language, the poetry, the lines that have become familiar quotations; the wit, the pathos, and the imaginative power; the reflection and comment upon life; the skilful and charming portrayal of human character, — indeed, all that makes the comedy worth reading, and all that has kept it alive on the stage, is the product of Shakespeare's mind and his alone. The sources from which he drew are therefore of little consequence. Except to the student of the poet's methods they are of no interest to-day; whereas the play, which Shakespeare's genius made out of them, lives and gives pleasure to young and old in the twentieth century, as it did in the days of Queen Elizabeth three hundred years ago.

What of "The Merchant of Venice" is Shakespeare's?

TIME DURATION OF THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

It may be interesting to consider again just when the various scenes of the play take place in relation to each other; for when we stop to think of it, — but only then, — Shylock's bond offers a puzzling problem. According to the most commonly accepted computations, the action of the drama covers seven or perhaps eight days, as follows:

First day. The three scenes of Act I.

Second day. The first seven scenes of Act II. (There may possibly be an interval of a day or two between Acts I and II.)

Third day. Scenes 8 and 9 of Act II. (These occur evidently the day following the earlier scenes of the act.)

Fourth day. Scene 1 of Act III. (How long an interval passes both before and after this scene it is hard to determine.)

Fifth day. The second, third, and fourth scenes of Act III.

Sixth day. Scene 5 of Act III and the trial of Act IV.

Seventh day. Act V. (This scene laps over into the morning of the eighth day.)

So far the time-arrangement of the play is a simple matter. But how shall we account for the three months' term of the bond? You remember the conversation between Shylock and Bassanio at the beginning of Scene 3 in Act I:

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.
Bass. Ay, sir, *for three months.*
Shy. For three months; well.
Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Then the "merry sport" of the pound of flesh is discussed. Antonio agrees to the terms of the bond, and Shylock goes to "purse the ducats straight" for the merchant. As soon as Bassanio has the money he makes hasty preparations for the journey, and from all indications sets sail for Belmont the evening after

the interview with the Jew. Furthermore, Portia's words at the opening of III, 2 seem to show that he has but just arrived:

Por. I pray thee, tarry; pause a day or two
Before you hazard. . . .
. . . . . .
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me.

Such sentiments as these would certainly not be appropriate had Bassanio been with her more than a few hours or a day at the most; yet at the close of this same scene, after the choice of the caskets has been made, Salerio arrives from Venice with the news of Antonio's plight. In his letter the merchant says, . . . "my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, *my bond to the Jew is forfeit*." Where have the three months gone?

It is barely possible, though extremely unlikely, that Shakespeare forgot all about the terms of the bond as he wrote them down in Act I. Of course we may imagine, as some have suggested we must, that after the first talk about the ducats other arrangements were made, so that when the bond was actually signed a much shorter time had been agreed upon by Shylock and Antonio. Indeed, there seems to have been some tampering with the original terms. Thus, in Act I, we heard nothing definite about the part of Antonio's body from which the pound of flesh should be taken. But at the trial, when reading evidently the words of the bond, Portia says, . . .

"Why, this bond is forfeit;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart."

A shortening of the term, however, to a few days, or a week at the most, seems wholly unreasonable when we remember the uncertainty of Antonio's "ventures" and the penalty of the forfeit. Moreover, such an important change in the conditions of the bond would certainly be mentioned somewhere else in the

play. All things considered, the three months of the original agreement must stand.

Two other explanations of this time problem in "The Merchant of Venice" have been frequently advanced. There are those who say that Bassanio has been at Belmont a long time when we first see him about to make his choice. In spite of Portia's words, "I would detain you here some month or two," they argue that the intimacy between the lovers, which is apparent throughout the scene, and also the friendship of Gratiano and Nerissa, could not be the result of a short acquaintance. Everything in their actions and speech, according to these critics, implies that they have been in each other's company many times before this scene of the caskets. There are other critics who declare that it is more probable to imagine Bassanio detained at least the greater part of the three months in Venice, making elaborate preparations for his journey to Belmont. Both explanations are far from satisfactory. Bassanio is not the sort of man who would dally away nearly three months in preparations that could easily be made in a day; nor is it easy to think of him living in doubt and uncertainty, "on the rack," as he himself says, for so long a time after his arrival at Belmont. In either case, a long interval detracts from our liking for Bassanio and from our interest in the play as a whole. Instinctively, we feel that Shakespeare intended us to include the departure of Bassanio and Gratiano from Venice, and the winning of Portia and Nerissa, all within two or three days at the most. Is there no simpler and more natural way in which we can account for the three months?

As long ago as the middle of the last century Professor Wilson announced what he called his "great discovery," namely, that Shakespeare often makes use of two different computations of time in the same play. By one of these hours and days are protracted; by the other weeks and months are contracted into shorter intervals. This double time, or "Short Time" and "Long Time," as he calls them, Professor Wilson applies to "Othello." Here the actual duration of action in the last act

is only a little more than thirty-six hours. During this short time there comes over Othello a "gradual change from intense love to a murderous frenzy of jealousy," in which he kills his innocent young wife. This great change demands, of course, the passing of weeks or even months, yet it is compressed into minutes and hours. So skilfully, however, does the dramatist manage things that the impression somehow is given of a long interval of time, so that we do not detect any improbability whatsoever. Indeed, it seems to us as we see or read the play that "events have followed their natural, orderly course."[1]

In "The Merchant of Venice" we evidently have another illustration of this use of double time. That the bond, and the penalty of a pound of flesh, may seem probable it is necessary to have it cover a long term. The result is the "three months" of Bassanio's conversation with Shylock in Act I. This is the "Long Time" of the play. The "Short Time" is the seven or eight days of the main action, from the borrowing of the ducats to the explanation of the rings in Portia's garden. The two do not seem incongruous or impossible simply because Shakespeare has artfully stretched out the week so that it really seems much longer. Many things contribute, all very subtly, to this lengthening effect. One is the episode of the masque and Jessica's elopement which comes wholly between the signing of the bond and the arrival of Bassanio and Gratiano at Belmont. Another is the choosing of the caskets, on separate occasions, by Morocco and Arragon. Still another is the business with Launcelot, and the suggestion of time passing while Bassanio is making preparations to sail from Venice. Above all are the large number and great variety of scenes that take place between the opening of the play and the choosing of the leaden casket. These events taken together, with many little inferences and hints that point to the passing of days, give the impression that a long time has elapsed, — so long a time that when Salerio brings the news from Venice of the forfeiture of the bond, we are not at all surprised

[1] Dr. H. H. Furness: New Variorum Edition of "The Merchant of Venice," page 339, *q.v.* for a full discussion of this subject.

that three months have passed. Probably no one who has ever seen the comedy on the stage has ever once questioned the matter of time. This, of course, is what Shakespeare wished, and the whole matter shows his skill in creating an impression of a natural and orderly development of the plot. After all, the time duration of the play is a trivial concern so long as the audience at the theatre feels that it is perfectly possible and correct. Shakespeare did not have in mind the critical reader or the classroom student when he wrote his dramas.

COMMENTS UPON THE CHARACTERS

Here are a few paragraphs from well-known books of criticism upon Shakespeare's characters. You will not always agree with everything in them, but they are all stimulating and may form the basis of interesting discussions. From them, too, you may possibly obtain new light upon the more interesting persons in the drama. You will find further critical passages in Dr. Furness's Variorum Edition of "The Merchant of Venice," and in the volumes from which these selections are taken.

Shylock

In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear "baited with the rabble's curse," he becomes a half-favorite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is a *good hater;* "a man no less sinned against than sinning." If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for "the lodged hate he bears Antonio," which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. He seems the depository of the vengeance of his race; and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy, and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled, and trampled on might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature, and to take something from that "milk of human kindness" with which his per-

secutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong; and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit hid beneath his Jewish gaberdine, stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and laboring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by one desperate act of "lawful" revenge, till the ferociousness of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him, and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. In all his answers and retorts upon his adversaries he has the best, not only of the argument, but of the question, reasoning on their own principles and practice.

—William Hazlitt,
"Characters of Shakespeare's Plays," 1817.

In the picture of the Jew there is not the tragic grandeur of Richard III; but there is a similar force of mind, and the same subtlety of intellect, though it is less selfish. In point of courage I would give the palm to Shylock, for he was an ill-used man and the champion of an oppressed race; nor is he a hypocrite, like Richard. In fact, Shakespeare, whilst he lends himself to the prejudices of Christians against Jews, draws so philosophical a picture of the energetic Jewish character, that he traces the blame of its faults to the iniquity of the Christian world. Shylock's arguments are more logical than those of his opponents, and the latter overcome him only by a legal quibble. But

he is a usurer and lives on the interest of lent moneys; and what but Christian persecution forced him to live by these means? But he is also inhuman and revengeful. Why? because they called him dog, and spat upon his Jewish gaberdine. They voided their rheum upon him, and he in return wished to void his revenge upon them. All this is natural, and Shylock has nothing unnatural about him.

— THOMAS CAMPBELL,
"Dramatic Works of Shakespeare," 1838.

Shylock is inwardly a dark nature; also he is inwardly a strong nature. In purpose, will, and passion he is a man of energy; and, by the bigotry of society, his energy is restricted to one mode of power, — the power of money. Money engages his activity, but does not exhaust his being. To have potency, he must have money. Having any amount of money, he may still be trodden on as a reptile; but wanting money, he is a reptile without a sting. Contempt is around him, as the light of day; he breathes, as he walks, an atmosphere of odium; but the light does not shame him; the atmosphere does not sicken him; he has the stout vitality of a proud constitution, and though he cringes, and bows, and smiles, and seems as servile as a dog, mean as his scorners think him, their lowest idea of *him* is reverence itself, compared with his highest idea of *them*. The lords of Venice may call the Jew a slave, but he is an aristocrat in every drop of his blood; and more value does he set on any drop that trickles in a Hebrew beggar's veins than the richest streams they can boast of from their upstart sires. They may use foul words to him, but that is their *own* discredit; they may spit on

him, but that is *their* infamy, and not *his;* he cannot give them blow for blow, but he can give them bigotry for bigotry; he refuses their doctrine, he willingly accepts their example.

— H. GILES, "Human Life in Shakespeare," 1868.

Shylock's relation to his daughter is a point where least can be said in his excuse. The ossification of his mind and feelings, his selfishness and bitterness, have also entered his family life, and, like corrosive acids, have eaten and destroyed it. While his co-religionists are wont to hold family ties in high estimation, and to keep their domestic life in a certain patriarchal holiness, so as to escape from the pressure of the outer world, Shylock, according to Jessica, makes his home a hell. He does not succeed in leaving harshness, avarice, hatred, and revenge out of doors, and in being gentle, kind, and generous within the bosom of his family; it is, indeed, an almost impossible task. Can the early death of his wife have contributed to this? But the remembrance of her attaches only to the turquoise which she has given him. If we may infer Shylock's conjugal love from his paternal love, there can be as little said of the one as of the other, and, consequently, we can scarcely suppose that had Leah lived longer she would have exercised a softening and ennobling influence upon her husband's character. His ducats, and his jewels, and the feeling of revenge against his Christian oppressors have so completely taken possession of his heart, that there is not even the smallest space left for conjugal or paternal love. Jessica is nothing to him but the keeper of his house and the guardian of his treasures. She leads the life of a prisoner; she is to shut the ears of the house, and, accord-

ing to Oriental custom, is not allowed to put her head out of the window to gape at "varnished" Christian fools, who are an abomination to her father. That she should possess any claim to the enjoyment of life Shylock never dreams; his withered soul never supposes that hers is expanding in youthful excitement and desire. Why does he not surround her life with at least such ornaments and finery as young girls are accustomed to regard as a great part of their happiness? Why does he not place her under the motherly care of a companion, instead of leaving her completely to herself at home while he goes about his money transactions? Why? From greed, selfishness, and hard-heartedness.

— KARL ELZE, "Essays," translated by Schmitz, 1874.

Portia

Portia, Isabella, Beatrice, and Rosalind may be classed together, as characters of intellect, because, when compared with others, they are at once distinguished by their mental superiority. In Portia it is intellect kindled into romance by a poetical imagination. . . . The wit of Portia is like attar of roses, rich and concentrated. . . . As women and individuals, as breathing realities, clothed in flesh and blood, I believe we must assign the first rank to Portia, as uniting in herself in a more eminent degree than the others, all the noblest and most lovable qualities that ever met together in woman.

Portia is endued with her own share of those delightful qualities which Shakespeare has lavished on many of his female characters; but, besides the dignity, the sweetness, and tenderness which should distinguish her sex generally, she is individualized by qualities peculiar to herself,

by her high mental powers, her enthusiasm of temperament, her decision of purpose, and her buoyancy of spirit. These are innate; she has other distinguishing qualities more external, and which are the result of the circumstances in which she is placed. Thus she is the heiress of a princely name and countless wealth; a train of obedient pleasures have ever waited round her; and from infancy she has breathed an atmosphere redolent of perfume and blandishment. Accordingly, there is a commanding grace, a highbred, airy elegance, a spirit of magnificence in all that she says and does, as one to whom splendor had been familiar from her very birth. She treads as though her footsteps had been among marble palaces, beneath roofs of fretted gold, o'er cedar floors and pavements of jasper and porphyry — amid gardens full of statues, and flowers, and fountains, and haunting music. She is full of penetrative wisdom, and genuine tenderness, and lively wit; but as she has never known want, or grief [not when her father died? — Ed.], or fear, or disappointment; her wisdom is without a touch of the sombre or the sad; her affections are all mixed up with faith, hope, and joy; and her wit has not a particle of malevolence.

And in the description of her various suitors in the first scene with Nerissa, what infinite power, wit, and vivacity! She half checks herself as she is about to give the reins to her sportive humor: "In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker." But if it carries her away, it is so perfectly good-natured, so temperately bright, so ladylike, it is ever without offence; and so far, most unlike the satirical, poignant, unsparing wit of Beatrice, "misprising what she looks on." In fact, I can scarcely conceive a greater con-

trast than between the vivacity of Portia and the vivacity of Beatrice. Portia, with all her airy brilliance, is supremely soft and dignified; everything she says or does displays her capability for profound thought and feeling as well as her lively and romantic disposition; and as I have seen in an Italian garden a fountain flinging round its wreaths of showery light, while the many-colored Iris hung brooding above it, in its calm and soul-felt glory; so in Portia the wit is ever kept subordinate to the poetry, and we still feel the tender, the intellectual, and the imaginative part of the character as superior to, and presiding over, its spirit and vivacity.

— Mrs. Jameson, "Characteristics of Women," 1833.
(Quoted by Dr. Furness.)

I chose Portia, then as now my ideal of a perfect woman, —

> The noble woman nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;
> The creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles;

the wise, witty woman, loving with all her soul, and submitting with all her heart to a man whom everybody but herself (who was the best judge) would have judged her inferior; the laughter-loving, light-hearted, true-hearted, deep-hearted woman, full of keen perception, of active efficiency, of wisdom prompted by love, of tenderest unselfishness, of generous magnanimity; noble, simple, humble, pure; true, dutiful, religious, and full of fun; delightful above all others, the woman of women.

— Mrs. Fannie A. Kemble, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1876.

Antonio

Antonio is a good man, — a man whom we love for his high integrity, his disinterested liberality, his devoted friendship; but his rashness in signing the bond suggested to the dramatist the propriety of characterizing him as deficient in worldly prudence, and too easy and unwary in his dealings with mankind. It was certainly through simplicity, though not what Shylock calls "low simplicity," that Antonio condemned interest; it was through simplicity that he thought lightly of the condition stipulated in the bond; he was imprudent in allowing himself to forget, or in failing to exert himself that he might be prepared for, the day of payment; he was incautious in venturing the whole of his wealth in argosies upon the ocean. That he was a rich merchant we may suppose to have been owing more to patrimonial inheritance than to his own mercantile sagacity and success. That he should be found unable, though a wealthy man, to lend three thousand ducats, was necessary to give occasion for the bond; and the inability is made to arise out of that incautiousness by which Shakespeare has so consistently characterized him.

— Rev. John Hunter,
Introduction to "Merchant of Venice," 1872.

From the beginning Antonio has abused and ill-treated the Jew, but this is the only stain on his character. Otherwise he is distinguished by gentleness, benevolence, and kind-heartedness, and it cannot be conceived that his hatred of the Jew would amount to such cruelty, and this at the very moment when, in regard to the confiscation of the Jew's property, he gives an unmistakable proof of his

generosity. His demand for the conversion arises, in all probability, from an entirely different motive, and we shall hardly err in seeking it in the general religious conviction of the Middle Ages, according to which none but believers in Christianity could partake of salvation and eternal blessedness. That the Jews are eternally lost is known even to Marlowe's Barabas, who says: "I am a Jew, and therefore am I lost." It is well known that this conviction rose to the belief that it was a meritorious work to assist the non-Christians to the blessings of Christianity, even against their own wish, by forcing them to become converts. From this point of view Antonio's demand and the Doge's action appear in a different light, and it is easily understood that they should regard the proposed conversion as a proof of mercy as well. They intended to save Shylock's soul from eternal perdition.

— KARL ELZE, "Essays," translated by Schmitz, 1874.

Gratiano

Gratiano is a most delightful and most natural character. He is one of those useful men in society who will keep up the ball of mirth and good-humor, simply by his own mercurial temperament and agreeable rattle; for he is like a babbling woodside brook, seen through at once, and presenting every ripple of its surface to the sunbeams of good-fellowship. If a picnic were proposed, Gratiano would be the man for the commissariat department; and the wines shall be unimpeachable in quantity as well as quality; the ladies shall lack no squire of dames, and the men no stimulus to keep their gallantry from rusting. And, what is better than all, if a friend be in adversity, Gratiano will champion him with good words and deeds,

if not with the most sagacious counsel. He would no doubt talk a man off his legs; and, therefore, Shakespeare brings him as a relief against the grave men, Antonio and Bassanio, who, being both anxious on account of worldly cares, resent his vivacity, and they are at all events as peevish as he is flippant and inconsiderate. Bassanio says of Gratiano that he "speaks an infinite deal of nothing." The best of it is, that Bassanio himself advances no claim to be the censor of his lively companion; for, in comparison with him, he is dull in capacity; and the very observation just quoted follows one of the most agreeable and sensible speeches in the play, made by "the infinite-deal-of-nothing" Gratiano. Shakespeare has made the best apology for the Merchant and his friend; but his own love of cheerfulness with good temper could not fail to throw liberally into Gratiano's scale, and he has nowhere produced a better defence of natural vivacity. Moreover, he has not made Gratiano selfishly boisterous, indulging his own feelings only; he first manifests a solicitude for Antonio's lowness of spirits, and then he rallies him. These are the small and delicate lights thrown into his characters that render them exhaustless as studies, and give us that indefinable, rather perhaps that unrecognized and unconscious interest in all they say and do, and which, to the same extent, appears to be the almost undivided prerogative of Shakespeare alone.

— Charles Cowden-Clarke,
"Shakespeare-Characters," 1863.

Jessica

Shakespeare has done the grandest justice to the elemental force of affection in woman's nature. He presents

it to us in every mode of beauty and truth. In his less serious plays, all the characters whom he intends for lovable have not only graces and charms, but natural feminine sensibilities. One exception there is, — which not even Shakespeare can make me like, — and that is the pert, disobedient hussy Jessica. Her conduct I regard as in a high degree reprehensible; and those who have the care of families, must, I think, feel as I do. She was a worthless minx, and I have no good word to say of her. If the fellow who ran away with her had, like old Pepys, left a diary behind him, I am quite sure that we should learn that his wife turned out an intolerable vixen. She selfishly forgot the duty of a daughter when she should have most remembered it. Why should she, a maiden of Israel, leave her poor old father, Shylock, alone in the midst of his Christian enemies? What if he was wrong? The more need he had of *her*. What if most wrong? Even then, even in the madness of defeated vengeance, in the misery of humbled pride, when regarded as most guilty, when there was nothing in the world for him but contempt without pity, the child of his home — his only child — should have had in her woman's heart a shelter for her scorned father.

— H. GILES, "Human Life in Shakespeare," 1868.

Nerissa

Nerissa is a good specimen of a common genus of characters; she is a clever, confidential waiting-woman, who has caught a little of her lady's elegance and romance; she affects to be lively and sententious, falls in love, and makes her favor conditional on the fortune of the caskets,

and, in short, mimics her mistress with good emphasis and discretion. Nerissa and the gay, talkative Gratiano are as well matched as the incomparable Portia and her magnificent and captivating lover.

— MRS. JAMESON, "Characteristics of Women," 1863.

GLIMPSES OF LIFE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME FOUND IN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

As you read the play, or as you think back over the various scenes after you have finished it, recall to mind any customs, or things of special interest, which differ from those of to-day. It may be well to make a list of some of them. Together they will give you a glimpse of life as it was in Elizabethan days. They may serve, too, as most interesting subjects for class talks.

1. Methods of travel.
2. Various kinds of coins and the value of money.
3. Interest and usury.
4. Masques and pageants.
5. Methods of telling time.
6. Archery and other sports of the age.
7. The feeling toward Jews.
8. Torture of criminals.
9. Puns and punning.
10. Mottoes on jewelry, — "cutlers' poetry."
11. Servants and companions.
12. Lighting of streets and houses.
13. Superstitions about dreams.
14. Messengers and forerunners.
15. The wearing of false hair.
16. The conduct of a trial.
17. Merchant vessels and merchandise.
18. The keeping of slaves.
19. Venice in 1600.
20. Oaths, words of salutation and fareweil, and terms of endearment.

FAMILIAR PASSAGES IN THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

When you first take a play of Shakespeare in hand, you soon begin to have the feeling that you have read this before, though you know you have not. The fact is, Shakespeare expressed the general mind and common feeling of us all in phrases so packed with meaning, so full of insight into human nature, so happy in figure and choice of words, that we have adopted them and added them to our stock of every-day language. Only the Bible has contributed more of these stock phrases to modern English speech. The result is that, without knowing it, we are constantly quoting words and even whole lines from Shakespeare's plays, as, for instance, when we speak of "the king's English," "sweets to the sweet," "much virtue in If," "at a pin's fee," "what's in a name?" "brevity is the soul of wit," "last, but not least," "every inch a king," "the tyrant custom," "single blessedness," "as easy as lying," "the short and the long of it," "a lion among ladies," "for ever and a day," "give the devil his due," "in my mind's eye," "the game is up," "forget and forgive," "cudgel thy brains," "what's done is done," "the pink of courtesy," "parting is such sweet sorrow," "I'll not budge an inch," etc.

With the exception of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," probably none of the plays have contributed more familiar phrases to our speech to-day than "The Merchant of Venice." Here are some of the most important. Others may be found in Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations." It will interest you to try to place them by recalling when and where and by whom they were spoken. How many of

them had you heard before you studied the play? Learn as many of them as you can.

1. I dote on his very absence.
2. A harmless necessary cat.
3. He is well paid that is well satisfied.
4. There is no vice so simple but assumes some mark of virtue on his outward parts.
5. I never knew so young a body with so old a head.
6. It is a wise father that knows his own child.
7. The quality of mercy is not strained;
   It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
   Upon the place beneath.
8. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.
9. The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose!
10. Let it serve for table-talk.
11. How far that little candle throws his beams!
    So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
12. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
13. I am Sir Oracle,
    And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!
14. An unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised;
    Happy in this, she is not yet so old
    But she may learn.
15. Makes a swan-like end
    Fading in music.
16. Young in limbs, in judgment old.
17. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
18. Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long.
19. I do know of these
    That therefore only are reputed wise
    For saying nothing.

20. The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils:
* * * * * * *
Let no such man be trusted.

21. All that glisters is not gold.

22. Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper!

23. Must I hold a candle to my shames?

24. They are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing.

25. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
A stage where every man must play a part
And mine a sad one.

26. What! wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

27. An honest exceeding poor man.

28. How many things by season seasoned are
To their right praise and true perfection!

29. 'Tis not in the bond.

30. A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

31. These blessèd candles of the night.

32. Sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages.

33. All the wealth I had
Ran in my veins: I was a gentleman.

34. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.

35. O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SHAKESPEARE

The facts that we know with absolute certainty about William Shakespeare can be given in a few meagre paragraphs. Some bare, prosaic records in Stratford and in the Stationers' Register in London, a few signatures, a will, a deed or two, an application for a coat-of-arms, an occasional mention of his name in court proceedings, in lists of actors, and in the works of fellow authors, — this is about all we have as the basis for a life of one of the greatest men that the world has produced. Traditions and quaint fanciful stories exist, as we might expect, in infinite number and variety. Many of these date back to the poet's own time, and therefore may have in them at least an element of truth. By far the greater number, however, gained popularity nearly a century after his death, when the curiosity of an age intensely interested in the drama began to look back and talk about the most marvellous of all the makers of plays. Few of these later traditions can be relied upon. Yet from the few scrappy facts that we have, supplemented by the earlier legends, and above all by a study of the plays themselves, it is possible to make a story of the poet's life, which, though by no means complete, is full enough to give us a fairly clear understanding of his growth in fame and business prosperity, and his development as a dramatist.

Few facts known about Shakespeare.

It is not strange that we know so little about Shakespeare. His age was not one of biographical writing. To-day a man of not one tenth part of his genius is besought by reporters for interviews concerning his life;

he is persuaded by admiring friends to write his memoirs; as his end approaches, every important newspaper in the land has an article of several columns ready to print the instant that word of his death comes over the wire. Three hundred and fifty years ago nothing of this kind was possible. Newspapers and magazines, genealogies and contemporary history did not exist. Encyclopædias, dictionaries of names, directories, "blue-books," and volumes of "Who's Who" had not been dreamed of. Personal correspondence was meagre, and what few letters were written seldom were preserved. Above all, a taste for reading the lives of men had not been formed. In fact, it was not until fifty years after Shakespeare's time that the art of biographical writing in England was really born. When we remember, in addition to these facts, that actors and playwrights then held a distinctly inferior position in society, and by the growing body of Puritans were looked upon with contempt and extreme disfavor, it is not surprising that no special heed was paid to the life of Shakespeare. On the contrary, it is astonishing that we know as much as we do about him, — fully as much as we know about most of the writers of his time, and even of many who lived much later.

Why we know so little about Shakespeare.

In the records of the 16th century there are numerous references to Shakespeares living in the midland counties of England, especially in Warwickshire. For the most part, they seem to have been substantial yeomen and plain farmers of sound practical sense rather than men of learning or culture. Some of them owned land and prospered. Such a one was John Shakespeare, who moved to Strat-

The poet's father, John Shakespeare.

ford-on-Avon about 1550 and became a dealer in malt and corn, meat, wool, and leather. He is referred to sometimes as a glover and a butcher. Probably he was both, and dealt besides in all the staples that farmers about the village produced and brought to market to sell. The fact that he could not write, which was nothing unusual among men of his station in the 16th century, did not prevent his prospering in business. For more than twenty years after the earliest mention of his name in the Stratford records, he is spoken of frequently and always in a way to show us that his financial standing in the community was steadily increasing. He seems also to have been a man of affairs. From one office to another he rose until in 1568 he held the position of High Bailiff, or Mayor of Stratford. Eleven years earlier his fortunes had been increased by his marriage to Mary Arden, the daughter of a prosperous farmer of the neighboring village of Wilmcote, who bequeathed to his daughter a house, with fifty acres of land, and a considerable sum of money. It is not fair, therefore, to speak of the father of William Shakespeare, as some have done, as "an uneducated peasant," or as "a provincial shopkeeper." At the time of the birth of his illustrious son he was one of the most prominent men in Stratford, decidedly well-to-do, respected and trusted by all.

The year before John Shakespeare brought his bride from Wilmcote to Stratford-on-Avon, he had purchased a house in Henley Street, and there he and his wife were living when their children were born. It was a cottage two stories high, with dormer windows, and of timber and plaster construction. Though frequently repaired and built over during the three hundred and fifty years that

The house in which Shakespeare was born.

have passed, it still remains in general appearance much the same as it looked in 1556. Simple, crude, plain, — it is nevertheless the most famous house in England, if not in the world. Noted men and women from all parts of the earth have visited Stratford to see it. Essays, stories, and poems have been written about it. Preserved in the care of the Memorial Society, it is the shrine of the literary pilgrim and the Mecca of tourists who flock during the summer to the quaint old village on the Avon. For here, in a small bare room on the second floor, William Shakespeare was born.

How little we know of Shakespeare, compared with even a minor poet of the 19th century, is shown by the fact that we are not certain of the exact date on which the greatest of all poets was born. The records of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford show that the child was baptized on April 26, 1564, and since it was the custom at that time for the baptism of children to take place on the third day after birth, it has been generally agreed that William was born on April 23, and that date is celebrated as his birthday. Tradition tells us, and probably truthfully, that it was also on this date, April 23, in 1616, that he died.

Date of the poet's birth, April 23, 1564.

Of the poet's boyhood we know next to nothing. It is a mistake, however, to assume that he lacked educational opportunities. There was in Stratford an excellent free Grammar School such as a bailiff's son would attend, and to which it is reasonable to suppose that the boy was sent. Here he studied chiefly Latin, for education then in England consisted almost entirely of the classics, especially Vergil, Ovid, Horace, and the comedies

Shakespeare's boyhood and schooling, 1571–1577.

SHAKESPEARE'S HOUSE AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON

THE ROOM WHERE SHAKESPEARE WAS BORN

of Plautus and Terence. The comment of Ben Jonson, his fellow dramatist of later years, that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek," should not be taken too literally. Compared with the profound scholarship of a college-trained man like Jonson, the Stratford boy had, to be sure, but little knowledge of the classics. Yet there is every evidence to show that he understood both Latin and French pretty well, and that he knew the Bible thoroughly. It is clear, too, that by nature he was a boy of remarkable powers of observation and keenly retentive memory, who used every opportunity about him for acquiring information and ideas. Whether he went to school or not would have made but little difference to one whose mind possessed rare powers of developing and training itself. Like Burns and Lincoln, he was educated more by people and the world of Nature about him than by books and formal teaching.

Five years in Stratford after leaving school, 1577–1582.

Ordinarily a boy of the 16th century would remain at the Grammar School from seven to fourteen, but there is a well-founded tradition that Shakespeare left in 1577, when he was thirteen years old, and never attended school again. About this time the records show that his father's financial difficulties began. Another pair of hands was needed at home to help in the support of the family, and William was the oldest son. Just how he was occupied, however, between his fourteenth and eighteenth years we cannot say. Probably he assisted his father in his declining business. One of the bits of Stratford gossip, collected by the antiquarian Aubrey, states that he was "in his younger years a school-master in the country," and another tells us that "when he was a boy he exercised his father's

trade. When he killed a calf, he would doe it in a high style and make a speech." It may be, as another reference seems to imply, that he was employed in the office of a lawyer. But we must not put too much confidence in these traditions, which, like all stories passed on by word of mouth, grew and changed as the years went by. As much as we should like to know of his employment, his reading, and all the circumstances that were developing his mind and character during these five important years, we must remember that "there is no reason why anything should have been recorded; he was an obscure boy living in an inland village, before the age of newspapers, and out of relation with people of fashion and culture. During this period as little is known of him as is known of Cromwell during the same period; as little, but no less. This fact gives no occasion either for surprise or scepticism as to his marvellous genius; it was an entirely normal fact concerning boys growing up in unliterary times and in rural communities."[1]

His marriage to Anne Hathaway, 1582.

The first really authentic record we have of Shakespeare after his school days is that of the baptism of his daughter Susanna, on May 26, 1583. The previous year, when only eighteen, he had married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a farmer in the neighboring village of Shottery. This picturesque hamlet was reached then from Stratford, as it is to-day, by a delightful foot-path through the wide and fertile fields of Warwickshire. Perhaps no other spot connected with the poet's life, except the house in which he was born, is dearer to people's hearts than the quaint old thatched-

[1] H. W. Mabie: "William Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man," page 51.

ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE AT SHOTTERY

INTERIOR OF ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE

roof building known as "Anne Hathaway's cottage"; for it still stands, at least in part, as it was when the "youthful lover went courting through the meadows, past the 'bank where the wild thyme blows,' to Shottery." In February, 1585, two years after the birth of Susanna, twins were born, and soon after the youthful husband and father left his native town to seek his fortunes in London.

It would be most interesting to know when and how and just why Shakespeare left Stratford, but no documents have been found that throw any certain light upon this portion of his life. It has generally been assumed that he found his way to the metropolis soon after the birth of his twins. Probably he walked by the highway through Oxford and Wycombe, or if he rode it was on horseback, purchasing a saddle-horse at the beginning of his journey, as was the custom then, and selling it upon his arrival in the city. There is an old tradition that, with other young men of the village, he had been involved in a poaching escapade upon the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy. In the first regular biography of Shakespeare written by Nicholas Rowe in 1709, nearly a hundred years after the poet's death, the story of this adventure is given as an actual fact. "He had, by a misfortune common enough among young fellows, fallen into ill company, and among them some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost

Reasons for leaving Stratford: the poaching tradition.

yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London." No trace of this ballad has been found; indeed, the whole story rests on gossip, and must not be taken too literally. It is supported, in a way, by the fact that Justice Shallow in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" is unquestionably a humorous sketch, or caricature, of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote Hall, thus suggesting that whether he had been prosecuted and harried out of town by his wealthy neighbor or not, the youthful poet had some personal reasons for ridiculing the head of the Lucy family.

Stratford too narrow a field for Shakespeare.

Still another account explains Shakespeare's departure from Stratford by stating that he joined a company of strolling players. Though this may possibly have been the means of his finding congenial travelling companions, it seems more natural to suppose that he left his native village much as a boy to-day leaves a remote country town and goes to the city to seek his fortune. His father's affairs, we know, had been steadily declining; his own family was growing; business in many trades through the midland counties was poor; any ambitious and high-spirited youth would have become restless and discontented. What was more natural, under these circumstances, than the breaking of home-ties and moving to London for its larger opportunities?

The traditions that Shakespeare, upon his arrival in the capital about 1585, was employed in a printer's shop and a lawyer's office, are extremely doubtful. It seems much more likely that he became connected with the

theatre at once, either as a call-boy in the building itself, or as one of those who held the horses on which gallants of the city rode to the play-house. That he should have turned to the theatre rather than to business to get a foothold in London is not strange. Companies of players had frequently visited Stratford in his boyhood. Indeed, the people of his native town seem to have been exceptionally fond of the drama, a fact, as Mr. Mabie has pointed out, "of very obvious bearing on the education of Shakespeare's imagination and the bent of his mind toward a vocation." As a lad of eleven he probably saw the pageant at Kenilworth Castle, in honor of Queen Elizabeth's visit to the Earl of Leicester. The processions and gorgeous costumes of this occasion, the tableaux and scenes set forth by the actors from the city must have made a profound impression on the mind of the imaginative boy. Moreover, it was a time of widespread interest in everything dramatic. When Shakespeare was born in 1564, there was not a single building in London devoted to the presentation of plays. At the time of his death, fifty-two years later, there were at least nine. The development of the drama from simple morality plays and historical pageants given in tavern-yards and on village greens, to "Julius Caesar" and "Hamlet," covered the period of the poet's youth; so that when he arrived in London, more than ever before or since in English history, the theatre was of compelling interest and attraction.

Shakespeare's first connection with the London theatres.

The six years after his arrival in London are a blank. We must imagine him rapidly rising through various positions at the Rose or the Curtain, for a young man of his genius and enterprise would not long remain obscure.

It is certain that he became an actor before he wrote for the stage. By 1592, however, he had evidently earned sufficient fame as a playwright to stir the jealousy of Robert Greene, a rival author, who in that year refers bitterly to him as "in his owne conceit the only *Shakes-scene* in a countrie," and then parodies a line from an early play that is attributed to Shakespeare. While as an actor he was learning stagecraft in the best possible school, he was undoubtedly trying his prentice hand by mending old plays and contributing bits to the work of his older companions. These earliest dramatic writings may have been numerous, but they are either entirely lost or hidden in plays credited to other men. His progress from a clerk in a country store to a writer of drama is thus admirably described by Sidney Lee: "A young man of two-and-twenty, burdened with a wife and children, he had left his home in the little country town of Stratford-on-Avon in 1586 to seek his fortune in London. Without friends, without money, he had, like any other stage-struck youth, set his heart on becoming an actor in the metropolis. Fortune favoured him. He sought and won the humble office of call-boy in a London playhouse; but no sooner had his foot touched the lowest rung of the theatrical ladder than his genius taught him that the topmost rung was within his reach. He tried his hand on the revision of an old play, and the manager was not slow to recognize an unmatched gift for dramatic writing.[1]

His earliest work as actor and playwright.

It was not until 1593, when Shakespeare was twenty-nine, that he appeared openly in the field of authorship. On April 18 of that year his long poem "Venus and

[1] Sidney Lee: "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Playgoer," page 32.

Adonis" was entered at Stationers' Hall for publication. It was printed by Richard Field, a Stratford man who had come to London somewhat earlier than the poet, and though published without a name on the title-page, the dedication to the Earl of Southampton was signed "William Shakespeare." The same is true of "Lucrece," which was registered in May of 1594. These two long poems must have had wide popularity, for they are often praised by critics of the day, and in the poet's own lifetime several editions of both were issued. They were the means by which Shakespeare became known as an author, for though some of his dramatic work may have been printed before this, plays were not regarded then as literature to be read, whereas these poems were issued under the poet's supervision for the reading public, and were thus "the first fruits of his conscious artistic life."

The first books published under his name.

Both as actor and playwright, Shakespeare's fame rapidly increased after 1594; in fact, the eight years that followed saw him rise to the height of his powers. His name stands first on the list of "principal Comedians" who acted Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour" in 1598. Francis Meres in his "Palladis Tamia," published in the same year, speaks of the "mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare," and then proceeds to name twelve of his plays and compare him favorably with the Roman dramatists Seneca and Plautus. Even if this list is incomplete we see that already before 1598 he had written three of his most charming comedies, one of them "The Merchant of Venice," and at least one of the tragedies that ranks among his very greatest. From then until his retirement

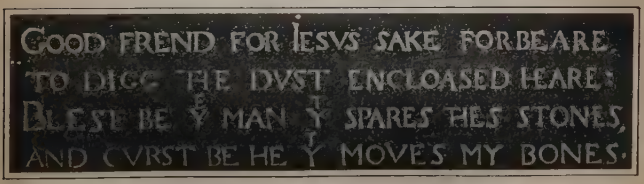
Progress in fame and fortune.

to Stratford fourteen years later, there are frequent references to his plays which appeared with astonishing rapidity. The dates when they were written and first acted are often uncertain, but before 1612 he had produced more than twenty dramas which together constitute the most marvelous body of literary work that ever came from a human mind.

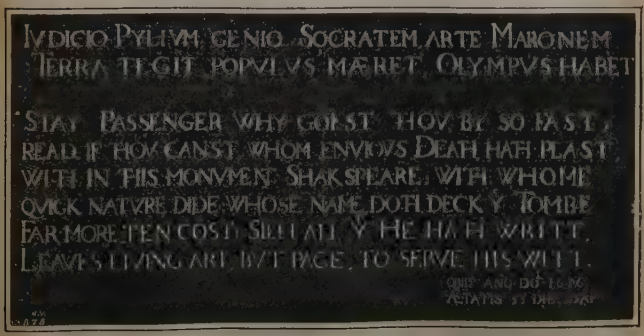
As an actor he did not continue to excel. If we may trust the sentiments of the sonnets, it is clear that he thoroughly disliked this part of his profession. Probably after 1604 he ceased to appear on the stage altogether. Financially it is certain that he was prosperous. We know, for one thing, that he owned shares in several London theatres, notably the Globe, where many of his own plays were first presented to enthusiastic London audiences. Then his successful application to the College of Heralds in 1599, on behalf of his father, for a grant of coat-of-arms; his purchase of several pieces of property in his native town; the records of lawsuits to recover debts which were owed him; numerous references which show us that he was looked upon as a man of means and standing; his friendship with Ben Jonson and other learned men of his day, — these facts, with the traditions of later generations, all convince us that the author of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" was a successful man of affairs, as well as one of the most prominent and best-loved dramatists of his time.

Although Shakespeare made London his home after 1584 or 1585, it is probable that he often visited Stratford where his family continued to reside. An old legend states that he frequently put up at the Crown Inn in Oxford on his way to and fro. Documents exist, moreover, which

Holy Trinity Parish Church, Stratford-on-Avon


GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE:
BLESTE BE Y MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.

Inscription on Shakespeare's Tomb


IVDICIO PYLIVM GENIO SOCRATEM ARTE MARONEM
TERRA TEGIT POPVLVS MÆRET OLYMPVS HABET
STAY PASSENGER WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST,
READ IF THOV CANST WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
WITH IN THIS MONVMENT SHAKSPEARE: WITH WHOME
QVICK NATVRE DIDE WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK Y TOMBE
FAR MORE THEN COST SIEH ALL Y HE HATH WRITT,
LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.

Inscription on Shakespeare's Monument, Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon

show that he was constantly investing money in real estate in his native village, to which he seems to have looked forward as a pleasant retreat after the strenuous days of actor, theatre-manager, and playwright were over. Probably the breaking off of London ties was gradual; but it is doubtful whether he was much in the city after 1612, the year in which "Henry VIII," the last of his plays, was written. He now appears in the records as "William Shakespeare, Gent., of Stratford-on-Avon"; and there he lived with his well-won honors, respected and loved, for four years.

Retirement from London, 1612.

In the early spring of 1616, Shakespeare's youngest daughter, Judith, was married. A month later he made his will, and on April 25 the register of Christ Church in Stratford shows that he was buried. According to the lettering on the monument he died on April 23, and that date, the date of his birth fifty-two years before, has been generally accepted as the day of his death. He was buried in the chancel of the fine old church, not far from the spot where he had been christened, and over the place where he lies may still be seen the quaint lines which tradition tells us he himself wrote to be inscribed above him:—

Death in Stratford, April 23, 1616.

> Good Frend for Iesus Sake Forbeare,
> To Digg the Dust Encloased Heare:
> Blest be Ye Man Yt Spares thes Stones,
> And Curst be he Yt Moves My Bones.

Whether the poet wrote these threatening words or not, no sexton has disturbed his remains, and the grave of William Shakespeare in the beautiful church by the river he loved has remained unopened.

Difficulties of determining the dates of the plays.

One of the problems of Shakespearean scholars for more than a century has been to determine the exact years in which the various plays were written. For just as we have no details of the poet's life, so are the records of his work either extremely meagre or entirely lacking. Not a single manuscript of anything that Shakespeare wrote has been preserved. The fire which burned the Globe theatre to the ground in 1613 may have destroyed the original pages of all the dramas: and yet, interesting and precious as they would be to us to-day, it is doubtful whether we can attribute to their loss our lack of knowledge as to just when each was written. We must remember that in Elizabethan times plays were not considered literature to be read. After they had served their purpose on the stage and passed out of popular favor, they were set aside and wholly neglected. As long as there was the slightest chance of their being in demand at the theatre, the author and companies of actors did their best to keep them out of print altogether, apparently in the belief that attendance at the playhouse would suffer if the drama in book form was in the hands of the people. Moreover, among the most cultivated men of the day, and especially among the growing body of Puritans, there was a strong prejudice against the whole theatrical business. By them, actors were held in low esteem, and plays were looked upon as things of light, or even questionable, character. The modern conception that regards the drama as a high and artistic form of literature had not been born.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that during his own lifetime only sixteen of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays appeared in print. These editions, which are known to-day as the Quartos, were small, cheaply-made, paper-bound pamphlets usually sold for a sixpence each. It is generally believed that they were issued without the poet's consent, and probably even against his wishes. Several of them were undoubtedly printed from shorthand notes taken slyly at a performance in the theatre. Others may have been set up from the soiled and tattered copies of a needy actor who had been secretly bribed to part with them. The confusion and strange blunders in the text show us that these Quartos were the careless and hasty work of piratical printers; indeed, it is almost certain that Shakespeare himself did not revise or in any way prepare a single one of them for the press.

The Quarto editions of the plays.

Inexact and inadequate as are the pirated Quarto editions, they would probably be the only plays of Shakespeare known to us to-day had it not been for a remarkable book that appeared seven years after his death. In 1623 two of the poet's friends put forth in a single volume his complete dramatic works. These men, John Heminge and Henry Condell, — names which are forever linked with Shakespeare's, — were actors in the same company with him, and, with Burbage, were joint owners of the Globe Theatre. The great dramatist, as a token of lifelong friendship, in his will bequeathed to them and to Burbage the sum of twenty-six shillings and eight pence to buy rings; and they in turn collected and edited his plays "to keepe the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow

The First Folio edition of the plays.

alive." It is a large volume of 901 pages in two columns of fine print, and on the title-page, besides a crude engraving of the poet, are these words:

Mr. William
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES

Published according to the True Original Copies.

LONDON
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

This is perhaps the most important volume in the whole range of English literature, for in it appeared for the first time in print twenty of Shakespeare's plays, among them "The Tempest," "Twelfth Night," "Julius Caesar," "Macbeth," "Cymbeline," and others of the dramatist's masterpieces. Heminge and Condell had access to stage copies of these plays which in another generation might have been lost or destroyed by fire; so that their work, coming when it did, saved for us a large portion of the finest poetry and deepest wisdom of Shakespeare's mind. It is no wonder that the 156 extant copies of this notable book are preserved as priceless treasures; for no other single volume ever did a greater service to literature than this Folio of 1623.

Although Heminge and Condell must have known in many cases the exact years in which Shakespeare was at work upon his various plays, they did not consider such

information of sufficient interest to include it in their edition. Well might we spare some of the tiresome eulogies, which they printed in their preface, for a page or two of facts that they so easily might have included. As it stands, however, the First Folio helps but little in arranging the chronology of the comedies and tragedies. And yet, in spite of all difficulties, by painstaking research scholars have come to a pretty general agreement upon the dates of composition of most of the plays. The evidence which they have used may be divided into two kinds, external and internal, — that is, evidence found outside of the plays, and evidence found within the works themselves. External evidence consists of such information as has been obtained from records of performances in diaries and letters; quotations and allusions in other books; entries in the register of the Stationers' Company, which for nearly three hundred years regulated the publication of all books in England; records of the Master of Revels at Court, and of course the dates on the title-pages of the Quartos themselves. A good illustration of this sort of evidence is the journal of a certain Dr. Simon Forman, in which he mentions the fact that in 1610 and 1611 he witnessed performances of "Macbeth," "Cymbeline," and "The Winter's Tale" at the Globe. Another is the celebrated passage in the "Palladis Tamia," or "Wit's Treasury," of Francis Meres, which was published in 1598: "As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so *Shakespeare* among y^e^ English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witness his *Gētlemē of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love labors lost*, his *Love*

Dates of composition: external evidence.

labours wonne, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice:* for Tragedy, his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo* and *Iuliet*." Such references as these give a definite year, later than which the plays referred to could not have been written. With a starting point thus settled, it is often possible to work backward and fix definitely the date of composition.

Dates of composition: internal evidence.

Internal evidence, though seldom as exact as external, and therefore more difficult to interpret, is much more abundant. It may be nothing more than a reference in the mouth of an actor to events or books the dates of which are known, such as the words in the Prologue to "Henry V" that refer to the expedition of the Earl of Essex to Ireland in 1599. More often it deals with considerations of the metre, language, and form of the work itself. By studying such matters as classical allusions, the use of Latin words, kinds of figures of speech, puns, variations of verse and prose, and many other changing peculiarities of the poet's method, scholars have been able to trace the development of Shakespeare as a writer, and thus assign many of his plays to their probable year on no other evidence than their style. For instance, the date of "Julius Caesar" is generally agreed to be not earlier than 1601 from the poet's use of the word "eternal" in the phrase "the eternal devil." As late as 1600 Shakespeare was using "infernal" in such expressions, but after that year he began to use "eternal," owing probably to the increasing objection among Puritans of London to the use of profanity on the stage. Even such a simple matter as the number of rhyming lines in a play may help to

place it approximately. In "Love's Labour's Lost," the earliest of the comedies, there are 1028 rhymes; whereas in "The Winter's Tale" and "The Tempest," written twenty years later, there are none and two respectively. It is therefore safe to assume that as Shakespeare's style developed he used rhyme less and less, so that tragedies with but few rhyming lines, such as "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Coriolanus," may be assigned, if on no other ground, to the later years of his life. Such matters of structure and style are by no means always certain. They are delicate to handle and require sound judgment and long experience. Yet it is by this sort of internal evidence, rather than by external facts, that the chronology of the plays has been determined.

The following table gives the result of research and comparison, of proof and conjecture, on the part of Shakespearean scholars. There still remain, of course, many differences of opinion; some of the dates are less certain than others; a few are almost entirely the result of guesswork. Yet when we consider the meagre data upon which students have built their conclusions, their lack of agreement seems remarkably slight and insignificant.

Probable dates of the plays.

Of the thirty-seven plays in the following table, the sixteen which appeared in Quarto editions during the poet's life were "Titus Andronicus," 1594; "Richard II," "Richard III," and "Romeo and Juliet," 1597; "1 Henry IV" and "Love's Labour's Lost," 1598; "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry V," "Much Ado About Nothing," "2 Henry IV," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," 1600; "The Merry Wives of Windsor," 1602; "Hamlet,"

Plays printed before 1623.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AND POEMS

Period	Year	Poems	Comedies	Histories	Tragedies
I	1590		Love's Labour's Lost	1 Henry VI	
	1591		Comedy of Errors	2 Henry VI; 3 Henry VI	
	1592		Two Gentlemen of Verona	Richard III	Romeo and Juliet
	1593	Venus and Adonis		King John	Titus Andronicus
II	1594	Lucrece	A Midsummer Night's Dream		
	1595		Taming of the Shrew	Richard II	
	1596		Merchant of Venice		
	1597		Merry Wives of Windsor	1 Henry IV	
	1598		Much Ado About Nothing	2 Henry IV	
	1599	Passionate Pilgrim?	As You Like It	Henry V	
	1600		Twelfth Night		

	1601	Phoenix and the Turtle?	Troilus and Cressida		Julius Caesar
	1602		All's Well that Ends Well		Hamlet
	1603		Measure for Measure		
	1604				Othello
III	1605				King Lear
	1606				Macbeth
	1607				Timon of Athens
	1608	A Lover's Complaint:	Pericles		Antony and Cleopatra
	1609	Sonnets (Printed)			Coriolanus
	1610		Cymbeline		
IV	1611		Winter's Tale; Tempest		
	1612			Henry VIII	
		6	16	12	10

1603; "King Lear," 1608; "Troilus and Cressida," and "Pericles," 1609. In addition to these, a Quarto of "Othello" was printed in 1622. The other twenty plays were not published, so far as we know, until 1623, when Heminge and Condell included them in the First Folio.

Periods of Shakespeare's development.

The periods shown in the table are, of course, wholly artificial. Shakespeare himself had no such division of his works in mind, and it is dangerous for us to-day to press very far the suggestion of clearly defined compartments for the plays. The development of the dramatist, like that of any artist, was gradual. Changes in style, in method, in views of life took place not in a single year, but were the result of slowly expanding power and growth of character. In that growth there were no sudden breaks or unaccountable transformations. The mind that created "Hamlet" in 1602 was the same mind that created "Twelfth Night" in 1600, no matter how black the line that separates them into two different periods. Yet a glance at the divisions in the table reveals two or three interesting facts.

The years of experiment, 1590–1593.

When Shakespeare has gained a foothold in the London theatres he first turns his hand to old plays, touching them up, remodelling, and improving. This is his natural work as an apprentice playwright. As he gains confidence and strikes out for himself, he experiments with all the forms of playwriting that then are known. Thus in "Love's Labour's Lost" we find one of the very few works the plot of which is his own invention; in "The Comedy of Errors" and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" he imitates the Latin comedies of Plautus; in "Richard III" and "King John"

he attempts historical tragedy, and in "Romeo and Juliet" he gives us tragedy, full of romance and passion, drawn from Italy whence so many of his stories of later years are to come. The four years from 1590 to 1593 are evidently years of feeling about, testing himself, and experimenting. Naturally he writes with great rapidity: he is full of enthusiasm and the impetuous rush of youth. All that he does shows signs of a beginner and an unsettled purpose. We therefore do not expect to find highly finished work. As a matter of fact, with the exception of "Romeo and Juliet" and "Richard III," none of the plays of this early period are acted on the stage to-day or often read.

It is now that Shakespeare writes his two long story poems, — "Venus and Adonis" in 1593 and "Lucrece" in 1594. In them he retells classical legends taken chiefly from the Roman poet Ovid. Their elaborate and florid language reminds us of similar narrative poems of the period. In their spirit and style they resemble the early plays, but in one important respect they differ: they are published with their author's name on the title-page. Unlike the Quartos of the dramas, Shakespeare prepares these poems for the press. Their popularity surpasses even that of the comedies. Seven editions of "Venus and Adonis" are issued between 1593 and 1602, and five of "Lucrece" between 1594 and 1616. Among the reading public of his day he becomes more widely known by them than by his work for the stage. He is now, in the eyes of the learned world, an author and creator of real literature.

The poems.

By 1594 the years of apprenticeship are over; Shakespeare has found where his powers lie. He is still young

and ardent; the sadder and more serious things of life have not yet come to him; he sympathizes with the demands of the London populace to be amused. The results are the last of the histories and seven years of comedies, — the fullest, and we may well believe, the happiest time of his life as a dramatist. His power of expression, his skill in constructing a play, — above all, his keen insight into human nature, — develop with astonishing rapidity, until he is the favorite playwright of his day. In wit and enthusiasm, in pure poetry and "gusto," in creation of interesting and delightful character, the plays from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to "Twelfth Night" stand unmatched. Not one of them has faded after three hundred years: they still are acted and read with profit and pleasure. Together they form "the rich period of unsurpassable comedy."

The great comedies, 1594-1600.

But youth and rollicking fun, high spirits and unbroken happiness, do not last. With the end of the century comes a turning-point in Shakespeare's life. Perhaps it is personal grief and suffering; possibly it is poor health and for the first time the thought that his own death may not be far away; possibly it is disappointment in his friends or his ambitions; or it may be simply a deeper wisdom coming with maturer years that now begins to make him think more and more of the greater and more serious things of life. The passions, the temptations, the moral struggles of mankind now absorb his interest. Naturally, comedy and history are inadequate for the expression of these deeper thoughts and emotions. With "Julius Caesar" begin the great tragedies, that "series of spectacles of the pity and terror

The great tragedies, 1601-1609.

of human suffering and human sin without parallel in the modern world."[1] Even the three comedies of these years are comedies only in name. Throughout them there is the atmosphere of suffering and sin. Their theme and spirit are more in keeping with "Hamlet" and "King Lear" than with the merrymaking and joyous fun of "As You Like It" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Thus every play of this period has a tragic motive, for during its nine years the mind and heart of the poet are concerned with the saddest and deepest things of human life.

The sonnets.

In 1609, toward the close of this period of tragedy, Shakespeare prints his volume of sonnets, one hundred and fifty-four in number. Some of them must have been written much earlier. Their style and youthful spirit show that; but besides, as early as 1598, Francis Meres spoke of Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends." Yet many of them show such power, such masterful handling of profound thought, such noble poetic form, that they seem to come from the years that produced "Hamlet" and "Othello." Probably the poet has been writing them off and on ever since he came to London, and now in 1609 he puts them at last into book form. It is well that he does so; for to-day every one who enjoys poetry reads them with delight. Unlike "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece" they do not fade; they are among the most perfect sonnets in our language, and they contain some of the finest lines that ever came from Shakespeare's pen. Here are two of the most admired:

1 "The Facts about Shakespeare," Neilson and Thorndike. The Macmillan Company, 1915.

29.

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

116.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken;
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The storm and stress of tragedy, however, does not continue to the end. In the last years Shakespeare turns

away from the bitterness and sorrow of life, and leaves us as his final message three romantic comedies of delightful charm. The calm and quiet humor of these plays is very different from the boisterous farce of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and the buffoonery of the clowns in the earlier dramas; but their beauty and sweetness and idealism make a happy and fitting close to the poet's work. In "Henry VIII," which shows brilliant flashes of his genius, and in "The Two Noble Kinsmen," which is not generally included among his plays, he writes in collaboration with John Fletcher, or with some other of the younger dramatists of these later years. He has made his fortune; he knows that his work is done; he is looking fondly toward his Stratford home, and so he turns over his place to other men.

The later comedies, 1610–1612.

First, — imitating, feeling his way, experimenting, rapidly and eagerly trying everything about him; then seven full years of whole-souled joy of living, enthusiasm, laughter, and fun; then deeper emotions and profound thought upon the saddest and most serious things of life; then a happier time of calm reflection and repose, followed by retirement from active work in London to the peaceful village home on the Avon; then, after four quiet years, the end. Thus, in a way, we begin to understand the development of Shakespeare's mind and character by a study of the years in which he wrote his plays and poems.

Summary.

SHAKESPEARE'S POPULARITY IN HIS OWN DAY

There somehow exists a quite general feeling that Shakespeare's genius was not properly appreciated in his own time; that dramatists, now ranked far below him, were more popular with audiences in the days of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. Whether this notion comes from the scarcity of facts which we have concerning the poet's life, it is hard to say. Certainly such a belief must be ranked among the most unfortunate of popular errors. There is ample evidence to show that he was not only popular with uneducated London tradesmen and apprentices who thronged the pit of the Globe, but in the best critical judgment of the day he was considered the first of poets and dramatists. "Throughout his lifetime," says Sidney Lee, "and for a generation afterwards, his plays drew crowds to pit, boxes, and gallery alike. It is true that he was one of a number of popular dramatists, many of whom had rare gifts, and all of whom glowed with a spark of genuine literary fire. But Shakespeare was the sun in the firmament: when his light shone, the fires of all contemporaries paled in the playgoer's eye."[1]

Shakespeare widely appreciated in his own lifetime.

Many bits of evidence have come down to us that show how high a place in people's hearts the plays of Shakespeare held in their author's lifetime. For instance, when he had been in London but ten years he was summoned by Queen Elizabeth to play before her and the court at Greenwich in the

Evidences of his popularity.

[1] Sidney Lee: "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Playgoer."

Christmas holidays. The favor which King James showed his tragedies is well known. "Hamlet" was acted several times in the first year of its production, both in London and at Oxford and Cambridge. Four editions were printed in eight years, — an unusual demand for those times. Moreover, the name of Shakespeare appears in the works of contemporary authors more than that of any other dramatist, and almost invariably it is coupled with praise and admiration. He is the "mellifluous" and "honey-tongued" poet. One sets him above Plautus and Seneca; another prefers him to Chaucer, Gower, and Spenser; another declares that "he puts them all down, ay, and Ben Jonson, too." In the preface of the first complete edition of his plays, published seven years after his death, the compilers, who were his fellow-actors and friends, wrote of him that he was one "who as he was a happie imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that easinesse that wee have scarse received from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our province, who onely gather his works and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough both to draw and hold you; for his wit can no more lie hid than it could be lost. Reade him, therefore; and againe and againe; and if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him."

Ben Jonson's praise of Shakespeare.

A part of the introductory material of this First Folio edition of the plays consists of poems of praise contributed by the poet's admirers. Among the most famous are the noble lines

of Ben Jonson, scholar, poet, and dramatist. Here are the words of a thoughtful critic who knew the theatre from the stage and from the audience, — a man who had been associated with Shakespeare throughout his London career and who understood, better than any other, his place in the hearts of English people.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND WHAT HE HATH LEFT US

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such,
As neither Man nor Muse can praise too much.

* * * * * * * *

Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My SHAKESPEARE, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further to make thee a room:
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so my brain excuses, —
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses;
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek
From thence to honour thee I would not seek

For names, but call forth thund'ring Æschylus
Euripides and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To life again to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage; or when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for a comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines,
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy Art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Upon the Muses' anvil, turn the same,
And himself with it, that he thinks to frame;
Or for the laurel he may gain to scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.

And such wert thou! Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turnèd and true filèd lines,
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Star of Poets, and with rage
Or influence chide or cheer the drooping stage,
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,
And despairs day but for thy volume's light.

Even without these lines and numerous other bits of unqualified praise from contemporary pens, the fact that the plays were financially successful, and that from them their author made for those times a small fortune, shows us that Shakespeare was truly appreciated by all sorts of people in his own day. Before his death he had taken the place which he now holds, — that of the foremost of English poets and dramatists.

SHAKESPEARE'S FAME SINCE HIS DEATH

During the three hundred years since Shakespeare's death the popularity of his plays on the stage has naturally varied somewhat with the changing taste of the times. Toward the end of his life a decline in the drama had begun, so that the generation which followed was more pleased by the coarse blood-and-thunder tragedies of Webster, Ford, and Massinger than by the more profound and more artistic work of Shakespeare. Certain ones of the plays that very early ceased to be popular on the stage have never since come into favor. Most of the histories, two or three of the earliest comedies, "All's Well That Ends Well," "Measure for Measure," "Pericles," "Timon of Athens," "Troilus and Cressida," and "Coriolanus" have seldom been acted since they were first produced. The subjects of some of these are not suitable to present in a modern theatre; in others, as in the histories, there is not enough action or dialogue to satisfy an audience to-day. Yet these make but a small portion of the poet's work. With the exception of the twenty years, 1640–1660, when all theatres in England were closed under the censorship of Cromwell's Puritan Government, there never has been an age that has not had the opportunity to see its foremost actors in the greater comedies and tragedies that came from Shakespeare's pen.

Shakespeare on the stage since 1616.

During the reign of Charles II, in the period known as the Restoration, and for the forty years that followed, literary taste was at its lowest mark. Naturally Shakespeare suffered at a time when the coarse and artificial

plays of Wycherley, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar fascinated both the nobility and the common people of London.

The feeling for Shakespeare during the Restoration, 1660–1740.

His dramas, to be sure, were still presented on the stage, but they were generally worked over, or even rewritten, to suit the strange fancies of the age. With music, new scenes, and new characters they were mutilated almost beyond recognition. From one point of view they were spoiled; yet it is significant that even to the theatre-goers of 1680 they still had enough vitality and imaginative power to be made the foundation of popular and successful entertainments. Dryden, the chief poet of the time, admired the genius of their author, and wrote prefaces for them in their renovated form. Betterton, the greatest actor of the age, was regarded at his best as the Prince in "Hamlet," a part which he played on many occasions, and always to enthusiastic houses. Samuel Pepys, who kept a remarkable diary between 1661 and 1669, records in his journal three hundred and fifty-one visits to the London theatres during these eight years. On forty-one of these occasions he saw plays by Shakespeare, or plays based upon them. Though Pepys was entirely unable to appreciate the poetry and all the finer qualities of what he heard, — he speaks in especially slighting terms of the comedies, — still it is interesting to know that he had even the opportunity, in eight short years, to witness fourteen different works of the great Elizabethan dramatist. This, too, in England's darkest age of literary appreciation!

The middle of the eighteenth century saw a new and genuine enthusiasm for Shakespeare. Scholars began to study his life and his work. New editions were published,

with notes and comment. The plays were revived on the stage in their original and true form. A great interest in all that he had said and thought was born, — an interest which grew through the years that followed, and still is growing. The foremost actors of all times have turned to him for their most ambitious work, and the crowning of their professional achievement. Perhaps the greatest of them all was David Garrick. "From his first triumph in Richard III, in 1741, to his farewell performance of Lear in 1776, he won a series of signal successes in both tragedy and comedy, in Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Richard III, Falconbridge, Romeo, Hotspur, Iago, Leontes, Posthumus, Benedick, and Antony. Garrick's services to Shakespeare extended beyond the parts which he impersonated. He revived many plays, and though he garbled the texts freely, yet in comparison with earlier practice he really had some right to boast that he had restored the text of Shakespeare to the stage. Further, his example led to an increased popularity of Shakespeare in the theatre and afforded new incentives for other actors. Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard were among the women who acted with Garrick. Macklin, by his revival of Shylock as a tragic character, Henderson, by his impersonation of Falstaff, and John Palmer in secondary characters, as Iago, Mercutio, Touchstone, and Sir Tobey, were his contemporaries most famous in their day."[1] After Garrick came Mrs. Kemble, Edmund Kean, Mrs. Siddons, Macready, and Booth, — names remembered to-day chiefly in connection with the Shakespearean rôles which they nobly played.

The great actors in Shakespeare's plays.

[1] Neilson and Thorndike: "The Facts about Shakespeare," page 174.

Shakespeare on the stage to-day.

Conditions have not changed in our own time. The greatest actors of our own generation, Sir Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, Helena Modjeska, Ada Rehan, Forbes Robertson, Beerbohm Tree, Julia Marlowe, and Edward Sothern, have been seen at their best in the comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare. Even in the twentieth century, with musical comedies, vaudeville, and moving-pictures to contend with, his plays are presented in greater number than are the plays of any other man who has ever lived. Nor are they revived merely for the sake of sentiment. They draw large audiences of all sorts of people. They still pay as purely business undertakings. "The Merchant of Venice," "Julius Caesar," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Twelfth Night," "As You Like It," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Taming of the Shrew," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor" still earn money for actors and theatre-managers as they did three centuries ago. What is far more important, they still give pleasure and amusement, they still stir laughter and tears and awaken the imagination as they did at the Globe in London in the lifetime of their creator.

Shakespeare's plays read, as well as acted.

Shakespeare, we know, wrote his plays to be acted: to him they were distinctly stage productions to be seen and heard at the theatre. So little did he think of their being read that he apparently had no concern about them in their book form. To-day, on the contrary, though they still are presented on the stage, it is in school and college classrooms, in libraries, and in homes that they are chiefly known. New editions are constantly appearing. Plays and novels that were popular twenty years

ago are out of print and difficult to find; the works of Shakespeare, in a dozen different forms, are in every book-store of England and America. Quite apart from their acting qualities, they have come to be regarded as the highest type of literature in our language.

This is not the place to give an extensive criticism of Shakespeare's works, nor a full analysis of the reasons why the world regards them so highly apart from their value as stage performances. It will be enough to remind the student that in nothing that has ever been written do we find a clearer or more faithful portrayal of all the varying moods and emotions of human nature. The characters which Shakespeare has created live in our minds both as individuals and as types of the ideal. He strips away the petty things from life and shows us the eternal elements underneath. He has that wonderful and rare quality called universality; for he expresses the thoughts and feelings of us all, — the things which we know to be great and true. Somewhere in his plays everyone finds himself, and the discovery, though he may not realize it at the time, makes a lasting impression. For Shakespeare is the supreme teacher: he suggests, but does not preach, the art of living. Other men have done all this. But Shakespeare has left us his wisdom and his interpretation of life in a more beautiful and stately diction, in phrasing more apt and pleasing, in poetry of greater imaginative power, than has ever come from the mind of man.

Why Shakespeare lives.

More books have been written about Shakespeare than about any other person who ever lived.[1] This is not surpris-

[1] For titles of those books on Shakespeare most interesting to students and teachers, see page 190.

ing when we consider that the interest in his plays, which has existed now for three centuries, is world-wide, and when we remember that the language in which he wrote often needs explanation and comment to make it perfectly clear to the average reader to-day. Almost every English and American poet of note has left a tribute to the greatest of all poets. Perhaps the best known are Milton's famous Epitaph, printed on page viii of this volume, and Ben Jonson's lines contributed to the First Folio in 1623, which are given on page 156. Here are a few other short poems, or selections from poems, which give honor and praise to those characteristics that have made Shakespeare the inspiration and the guiding-star of poets since Elizabethan times.

JAMES THOMSON

FOR lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakespeare thine and Nature's boast?

Summer — 1727.

WILLIAM COLLINS

THE temper of our isle, though cold, is clear;
And such our genius, noble though severe.
Our Shakespeare scorn'd the trifling rules of art,
But knew to conquer and surprise the heart!
In magic chains the captive thought to bind,
And fathom all the depths of human kind!

On our Late Taste in Music — 1747

THOMAS GRAY

FAR from the sun and summer gale
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.
"This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

The Progress of Poesy — 1757.

HENRY ALFORD

WE stood upon the tomb of him whose praise,
Time, nor oblivious thrift, nor envy chill,
Nor war, nor ocean with her severing space,
Shall hinder from the peopled world to fill;
And thus, in fulness of our heart, we cried:
God's works are wonderful — the circling sky,
The rivers that with noiseless footing glide,
Man's firm-built strength, and woman's liquid eye;
But the high spirit that sleepeth here below,
More than all beautiful and stately things,
Glory to God the mighty Maker brings;
To whom alone 'twas given the bounds to know
Of human action, and the secret springs
Whence the deep streams of joy and sorrow flow.

Stratford-upon-Avon — 1837

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

THERE Shakespeare, on whose forehead climb
The crowns o' the world: O eyes sublime
With tears and laughter for all time!

A Vision of Poets—1844.

LEIGH HUNT

. . . HUMANITY'S divinest son,
That sprightliest, gravest, wisest, kindest one . . .

Thoughts of the Avon—1844.

ROBERT BROWNING

—I DECLARE our Poet, him
Whose insight makes all others dim:
A thousand Poets pried at life,
And only one amid the strife
Rose to be Shakespeare.

Christmas Eve and Easter Day—1850.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

GREAT poet, 'twas thy art
To know thyself, and in thyself to be
Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,
Or the firm, fatal purpose of the heart,
Can make of Man. Yet thou wert still the same,
Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.

To Shakespeare—1851.

William Wetmore Story

. . . Shakespeare, whose strong soul could climb
Steeps of sheer terror, sound the ocean grand
Of Passion's deeps, or over Fancy's strand
Trip with his fairies, keeping step and time.
His, too, the power to laugh out full and clear,
With unembittered joyance, and to move
Along the silent, shadowy paths of love
As tenderly as Dante, whose austere,
Stern spirit through the worlds below, above,
Unsmiling strode, to tell their tidings here.

The Mighty Makers, II — 1851

Matthew Arnold

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask — thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at. — Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

Shakespeare — 1867

THE THEATRE OF SHAKESPEARE'S DAY

When Shakespeare left Stratford and went to London, theatres were in their infancy. The first one had been built in 1576, when he was a lad of twelve, and on his arrival in the city there were but three small wooden structures devoted to the production of plays. Enthusiasm for the drama, however, was aglow. With the sanction of Queen Elizabeth, herself a lover of pageants and revels, and under the patronage of the powerful Earls of Leicester, Southampton, and Rutland, the popular demand for this form of amusement grew with amazing rapidity. Theatres shot up one after another until in 1633 there were at least nineteen in London, "a number," says Brandes, "which no modern town of 300,000 inhabitants can equal." Poets, courtiers, scholars, — everyone who could write, — turned to the making of plays. The art which Shakespeare found in its crude and humble beginnings, in the short period of his active life, that is, between 1585 and 1610, developed through every stage to its highest form, so that never in the three hundred years that have since elapsed has the drama of the Elizabethan days been surpassed. In this development Shakespeare was "a pioneer — almost the creator or first designer — as well as the practised workman in unmatched perfection."[1]

Popularity of the first theatres.

Though the first theatre in England was not erected until Shakespeare was twelve years old, long before his time there had been many different kinds of simple plays. The instinct to act out a story had existed from the child-

[1] Sidney Lee: "Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Playgoer."

hood of the race. With the earliest telling of legends and folktales by minstrels and bards there had often been occasion for dramatic recital, dialogue, and action. For centuries, too, there had been the solemn mysteries and quaint old moralities. Mummers and bands of strolling players had wandered over Europe throughout the Middle Ages. The drama, therefore, which flowered in the last half of the sixteenth century, was not a new and sudden birth, but rather came as the natural outgrowth of centuries of crude and humble plays. In the beginning these had been closely connected with the service of the church; in fact, they had been a means of religious instruction rather than a form of amusement. To understand this more clearly, let us compare their origin with that of the Greek drama in earlier ages still.

Plays before theatres were built.

Many, many centuries before Shakespeare was born, — five or six hundred years B.C., — the God Dionysus, or Bacchus, was worshipped in Greece at country festivals by boisterous groups of men who chanted and marched and exchanged bantering jests as they danced about the altar and acted out legends connected with the god. These actors, who represented the satyr followers of Dionysus, generally were clad in goatskins, whence we have our word "tragedy," from the Greek *tragos*, a goat, and *tragodia*, a goat-song. From these simple beginnings sprang the drama of Greece, which produced Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The religious element persisted in ancient times much longer than in England, for the plays of the Greek dramatists who correspond to Shakespeare were still a form of worship. In the center of the orchestra

The religious origin of the Greek drama.

stood the altar of Dionysus, about which the chorus moved in solemn procession, chanting and reciting; before the performance began there were sacrifices to the god, and the plays were given in the spring on the days of the Dionysian festival. Greek tragedy was therefore not merely an entertainment, but a serious religious function. Beginning as a popular form of Nature worship, it finally became a means of expression for the most serious and finest of Greek thought and wisdom. As it spread from Athens to other towns, little by little it ceased to be a religious affair, until at last, as it gradually lost its vitality and splendor, its relation to the worship of Dionysus entirely disappeared. In similar fashion, comedy (from *comos*, a band of revellers, and *odé*, a song) developed from the ruder, more rustic elements in the worship of the same god, though here, as we might expect, the religious element did not persist as long as it did in its greater and more serious cousin, tragedy.

More than eighteen hundred years later, in England, we find the beginnings of the drama again closely related to worship. At a time when few of the common people could read, the priests in the churches found no method of teaching their congregations the stories of the Bible so effective as the use of objects and pictures which appealed to the eye. The effectiveness of their teaching was enormously increased when they added movement, action, and talk to their picture lessons. Indeed, it was but a step from the impressive and beautiful service of the Mass to a dramatic presentation, in simple form, of the most solemn scenes in religious history. "In this manner the people not only *heard* the story of the Adoration of the Magi and of the

English drama begins in the Church.

Marriage in Cana, but *saw* the story in tableau. In course of time the persons in these tableaux spoke and moved, and then it was but a logical step to the representation dramatically, by the priests before the altar, of the striking or significant events in the life of Christ."[1]

The Mysteries and Miracle Plays.

Thus in the services of the church at Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter were laid the foundations of our modern drama. These earliest performances, which were called Mysteries, dealt wholly with Bible stories, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment, and with the life of Christ; but as they became more and more popular with the masses, a broader field of subjects was sought, and lives of saints were used for dramatic material in the Miracle Plays of a century later. Not only were the priests the authors of both these simple forms of drama, but with the choir boys they were also the actors. For many years these plays were given on Holy Days and Saints' Days, either at the altar in the church itself, or in the enclosure just outside its walls. Their object continued to be largely religious instruction. In the Miracle plays, however, there were opportunities for a good deal of grotesque amusement. Incidents in the lives of the saints were not always serious or spiritual. The Devil gradually became more or less of a comic character. As the performances grew less solemn and awe-inspiring, the attitude of the people toward them changed. No longer did they attend them to worship, but rather to see a show and be amused. Gradually, therefore, they became separated from the service of the church, until finally they were banished once for all from the sacred walls, and but a few years after they had been

[1] W. H. Mabie: "William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist, and Man."

given at the altar they were being denounced by the priests as base and wicked things. Indeed, the feeling that plays are devices and temptations of Satan, which still exists, may be traced to the time, four centuries ago, when the drama lost favor with the Church.

Trade-Guilds and the plays.

The Mysteries and Miracle Plays did not decline in popularity when they were abandoned by the various religious orders. On the contrary, with the greater freedom and larger opportunity which separation from the church gave them, they increased rapidly in the people's favor. They were now taken up by the trade-guilds which, by the fifteenth century, developed elaborate and systematic methods of presenting them. Often different groups of tradesmen, such as the weavers' guild or the goldsmiths' guild, would unite, each band or "company" presenting an act or scene in the play to be undertaken. Huge, two-story covered wagons, somewhat like our large moving-vans to-day, took the place of stage and property-rooms. The actors dressed in the enclosed part of the vehicle, and then mounted a ladder or some rough stairs to the top story, or roof, where they performed their parts. Announced by heralds, — sometimes even by proclamation of the Mayor, — these pageants, as they were called, were drawn through the town on holidays and occasions of special festival. In the course of its progress the moving-stage would stop several times, — at the corners of the principal streets, in a public square, often at the doors of a church or cathedral. Then the crowd which had been following in its wake gathered about it to witness again the drama of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, of Noah, the flood and the ark, of Pilate and Herod, or one of the

numberless other stories with which they had been familiar from childhood.

Miracle Plays and Mysteries were followed by the Moralities in which abstract qualities such as Pleasure, Slander, Rage, Perseverance, and the Seven Deadly Sins took the place of characters from the Bible. This was a long stride forward. Now the field of subjects was greatly enlarged. Originality both in writing plays and in producing them was now first in demand. Opportunity had come at last for the creation of character, and for the use of everyday life on the stage. "Everyman," which has often been acted in our time, is a good example of what the Moralities at their best could be. Like the Miracle plays they were generally given by the guilds in marketplaces, enclosures of castles, and inn-yards where people could watch them from windows and balconies, as well as from the ground about the portable stage. Heavy, crude, and dull as these old plays now seem to us, they were intensely enjoyed by the populace of those far-away simpler times. From the eagerness and excitement with which they awaited their coming to town, or travelled long distances to see them, it is evident that a love of acting was inborn in the hearts of the people which sooner or later would develop a more finished and artistic drama.

The Moralities.

None of the performers in the Mysteries or Miracle Plays had been professional actors; but now with the Moralities came the opportunity for men to make a business of acting. As religious subjects gradually disappeared from the pageant stage, actors by profession came into existence. Wandering minstrels and story-tellers, mummers

Acting as a profession; companies of actors.

and strolling players, began to join together in troops for protection and companionship. "From the days of Henry VI onwards, members of the nobility began to entertain these companies of actors, and Henry VII and Henry VIII had their own private comedians. A 'Master of the Revels' was appointed to superintend musical and dramatic entertainments at court." A little later a statute of Parliament declared that "all actors who were not attached to the service of a nobleman should be treated as rogues and vagabonds, or in other words, might be whipped out of any town in which they appeared. This decree, of course, compelled all actors to enter the service of one great man or other, and we see that the aristocracy felt bound to protect their art. A large number of the first men in the kingdom, during Elizabeth's reign, had each his company of actors. The player received from the nobleman, whose 'servant' he was, a cloak bearing the arms of the family. On the other hand, he received no salary, but was simply paid for each performance given before his patron. We must thus conceive Shakespeare as bearing on his cloak the arms of Leicester, and afterwards of the Lord Chamberlain, until about his fortieth year. From 1604 onwards, when the company was promoted by James I to be His Majesty's Servants, it was the Royal arms that he wore."[1]

The first theatres in London.

For many years these companies of professional actors had no regular buildings in which to give their performances. Their plays were presented before their noble patrons in the great halls of their castles, and occasionally at court for the amusement of the king or queen. As late as Shake-

[1] Georg Brandes: "William Shakespeare," page 99.

speare's boyhood they were witnessed by the common people in the yards of taverns, in the open streets, or on village greens. If the actors played in London, either in the guild-halls or out of doors, they first had to obtain a license from the Lord Mayor for each performance, and then they were obliged to surrender half of their receipts to the city treasury. These trying conditions, with the growing popularity of the drama among all classes, finally led in 1576 to the erection of the first building for acting purposes. This was called the Theatre. The following year the Curtain was erected; in 1587, the Rose; in 1594, the Swan; and in 1599, the Globe. Once begun they shot up with wonderful rapidity. When Shakespeare arrived in the city there were but three playhouses; in 1611, when he retired to Stratford, there were probably ten or twelve.

The location of the first theatres.

In one sense London even then did not possess a theatre, for the early playhouses were not in the city at all. They were built on a tract of open land across the Thames, at the further end of London Bridge, outside the walls and well beyond the jurisdiction of the Mayor. The capital was then a town of small dimensions, barely a mile square, with a population of nearly 200,000 crowded together in houses which were constructed largely of wood. The streets were narrow, crooked, and muddy. Adequate means of fighting fire and disease did not exist. The Corporation was therefore strongly opposed to the erection of dangerous and inflammable structures upon the few vacant spaces within the walls. Moreover, among the Puritans, who were coming to be a large and influential body, opposition to the drama was growing more marked

and open; so that the companies of actors were obliged to put up their theatres well beyond the reach of the city's laws.

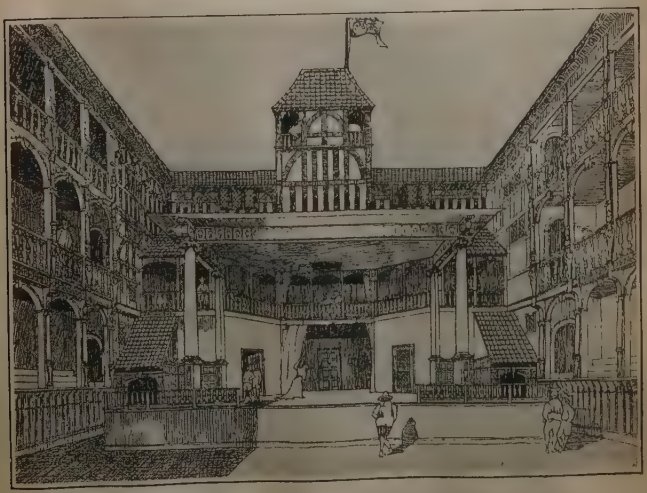
Let us now pay a visit to the Globe, to us the most interesting of all the theatres, for it is here that Shakespeare's company acts, and here many of his plays are first seen on the stage. We cross the Thames by London Bridge with its lines of crowded booths and shops and throngs of bustling tradesmen; or if it is fine weather we take a small boat and are rowed over the river to the southern shores. Here on the Bankside, in the part of London now called Southwark, beyond the end of the bridge, and in the open fields near the Bear Garden, stands a roundish, three-story wooden building, so high for its size that it looks more like a clumsy, squatty tower than a theatre. As we draw nearer we see that it is not exactly round after all, but is somewhat hexagonal in shape. The walls seem to slant a little inward, giving it the appearance of a huge thimble, or cocked hat, with six flattened sides instead of a circular surface. There are but few small windows and two low shabby entrances. The whole structure is so dingy and unattractive that we stand before it in wonder. Can this be the place where "Hamlet," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Julius Caesar" are put on the stage!

The Globe Theatre: its external appearance.

Our amazement on stepping inside is even greater. The first thing that astonishes us is the blue sky over our heads. The building has no roof except a narrow strip around the edge and a covering at the rear over the back part of the stage. The front of the stage and the whole center of the theatre is open to the air. Now we see how the in-

The Globe Theatre: the interior.

THE GLOBE THEATRE



INTERIOR OF AN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Godfrey's reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre

terior is lighted, though with the sunshine must often come rain and sleet and London fog. Looking up and out at the clouds floating by, we notice that a flag is flying from a short pole on the roof over the stage. This is most important, for it is announcing to the city across the river that this afternoon there is to be a play. It is bill-board, newspaper notice, and advertisement in one: and we may imagine the eagerness with which it is looked for among the theatre-loving populace of these later Elizabethan years. When the performance begins the flag will be lowered to proclaim to all that "the play is on."

Where, now, shall we sit? Before us on the ground level is a large open space, which corresponds to the orchestra circle on the floor of a modern playhouse. But here there is only the flat bare earth, trodden down hard, with rushes and straw scattered over it. There is not a sign of a seat! This is the "yard," or, as it is sometimes called, "the pit," where, by paying a penny or two, London apprentices, sailors, laborers, and the mixed crowd from the streets may stand jostling together. Some of the more enterprising ones may possibly sit on boxes and stools which they bring into the building with them. Among these "groundlings" there will surely be bustling confusion, noisy wrangling, and plenty of danger from pickpockets; so we look about us to find a more comfortable place from which to watch the performance.

Seating arrangements in the theatre: the pit.

On three sides of us, and extending well around the stage, are three tiers of narrow balconies. In some places these are divided into compartments, or boxes. The prices here are higher, varying from a few pennies to half a crown, according to

The balconies and boxes.

the location. By putting our money into a box held out to us, — there are no tickets, — we are allowed to climb the crooked wooden stairs to one of these compartments. Here we find rough benches and chairs, and above all a little seclusion from the throng of men and boys below. Along the edge of the stage we observe that there are stools, but these places, elevated and facing the audience, seem rather conspicuous, and besides the prices are high. They will be taken by the young gallants and men of fashion of London, in brave and brilliant clothes, with light swords at their belts, wide ruffled collars about their necks, and gay plumes in their hats. It will be amusing to see them show off their fine apparel, and display their wit at the expense of the groundlings in the pit, and even of the actors themselves. We are safer, however, and much more comfortable here in the balcony among the more sober, quiet gentlemen of London, who with mechanics, tradesmen, nobles, and shop-keepers have come to see the play.

The stage.

The moment we entered the theatre we were impressed by the size of the stage. Looking down upon it from the balcony, it seems even larger and very near us. If it is like the stage of the Fortune it is square, as shown in the illustration facing page 176. Here in the Globe it is probably narrower at the front than at the back, tapering from the rear wall almost to a point. Whatever its shape, it is only a roughly-built, high platform, open on three sides, and extending halfway into the "yard." Though a low railing runs about its edge, there are no footlights, — all performances are in the afternoon by the light of day which streams down through the open top, — and strangest of all there is no curtain. At each

side of the rear we can see a door that leads to the "tiring-rooms," where the actors dress, and from which they make their entrances. These are the "green-rooms" and wings of our theatre to-day. Between the doors is a curtain that now before the play begins is drawn together. Later when it is pulled aside, — not *upward* as curtains usually are now, — we shall see a shallow recess or alcove which serves as a secondary, or inner stage. Over this extends a narrow balcony covered by a roof which is supported at the front corners by two columns that stand well out from the wall. Still higher up, over the inner stage, is a sort of tower, sometimes called the "hut," and from a pole on this the flag is flying which summons the London populace from across the Thames. Rushes are strewn over the floor; there are no drops or wings or walls of painted scenery. In its simplicity and bareness it reminds us of the rude stage of the strolling players. Indeed, the whole interior of the building seems to be but an adaptation of the tavern-yard and village-green.

How, we wonder, can a play like "Julius Caesar" or "The Merchant of Venice" be staged on such a crude affair as this! What are the various parts of it for? Practically all acting is done, we shall see, on the front of the platform well out among the crowd in the pit, with the audience on three sides of the performers. All out-of-door scenes will be acted here, from a conversation in the streets of Venice or a dialogue in a garden, to a battle, a procession, or a banquet in the Forest of Arden. Here, too, with but the slightest alteration, or even with no change at all, interior scenes will be presented. With the "groundlings" crowded close up to its edges, and with young gallants

Use of the main stage.

sitting on its sides, this outer stage comes close to the people. On it will be all the main action of the drama: the various arrangements at the rear are for supplementary purposes and certain important effects.

Uses of the inner stage.

The inner stage, or alcove beyond the curtain, is used in many ways. It may serve for any room somewhat removed from the scene of action, such as a passage-way or a study. It often is made to represent a cave, a shop, or a prison. Here Othello, in a frenzy of jealous passion, strangles Desdemona as she lies in bed; here probably the ghost of Caesar appears to Brutus in his tent on the plains of Philippi; here stand the three fateful caskets in the mansion at Belmont, as we see by Portia's words,

> "Go, *draw aside the curtains*, and discover
> The several caskets to this noble Prince."

Tableaux and scenes within scenes, such as the short play in "Hamlet" by which the prince "catches the conscience of the king," are acted in this recess. But the most important use is to give the effect of a change of scene. By drawing apart and closing the curtain, with a few simple changes of properties in this inner compartment, a different background is possible. By such a slight variation of setting at the rear, the platform in the pit is transformed, by the quick imagination of the spectators, from a field or a street to a castle hall or a wood. Thus, the whole stage becomes the Forest of Arden by the use of a little greenery in the distance. Similarly, a few trees and shrubs at the rear of the inner stage, when the curtain is thrown aside, will change the setting from the court-room in the fourth act of "The Merchant of Venice," to the

scene in the garden at Belmont which immediately follows.

The balcony over the inner stage serves an important purpose, too. With the windows, which are often just over the doors leading to the tiring-rooms, it gives the effect of an upper story in a house, of walls in a castle, a tower, or any elevated position. This is the place, of course, where Juliet comes to greet Romeo who is in the garden below. In "Julius Caesar" when Cassius says,

Uses of the balcony over the stage.

"Go Pindarus, *get higher on that hill;*

* * * * * *

And tell me what thou notest about the field,"

the soldier undoubtedly climbs to the balcony, for a moment later, looking abroad over the field of battle, he reports to Cassius what he sees from his elevation. Here Jessica appears when Lorenzo calls under Shylock's windows, "Ho! who's within?" and on this balcony she is standing when she throws down to her lover a box of her father's jewels. "Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains," she says, and retires into the house, appearing below a moment later to run away with Lorenzo and his masquerading companions.

Besides these simple devices, if we look closely enough we shall see a trap-door, or perhaps two, in the platform. These are for the entrance of apparitions and demons. They correspond, in a way, to the balcony by giving the effect of a place lower than the stage level. Thus in the first scene of "The Tempest," which takes place in a storm at sea, the notion of a ship may be suggested to the audience by sailors

Other stage devices.

entering from the trap-door, as they might come up a hatchway to a deck. If it is a play with gods and goddesses and spirits, we may be startled to see them appear and disappear through the air. Evidently there is machinery of some sort in the hut over the balcony which can be used for lowering and raising deities and creatures that live above the earth. On each side of the stage is a flight of steps leading to the balcony. These are often covered, as plainly shown by Mr. Godfrey's reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre facing page 176. Here sit councils, senates, and princes with their courts. Macbeth uses them to give the impression of ascending to an upper chamber when he goes to kill the king, and down them he rushes to his wife after he has committed the fearful murder.

Scenery on the stage.

What astonishes us most, however, is the absence of scenery. To be sure, some slight attempt has been made to create scenic illusion. There are, perhaps, a few trees and boulders, a table, a chair or two, and pasteboard dishes of food. But there is little more. In the only drawing of the interior of an Elizabethan theatre that has been preserved, — a sketch of the Swan made in 1596, — the stage has absolutely no furniture except one plain bench on which one of the actors is sitting. Here before us in the Globe the walls may be covered with loose tapestries, black if the play is to be a tragedy, blue if a comedy; but it is quite possible that they are entirely bare. A placard on one of the pillars announces that the stage is now a street in Venice, now a courtroom, now the hall of a stately mansion. It may be that the Prologue, or even the actors themselves, will tell us at the opening of an act just where the scene is laid and what we are to imagine the platform to represent.

In "Henry V," for instance, the Prologue at the beginning not only explains the setting of the play, but asks forgiveness of the audience for attempting to put on the stage armies and battles and the "vasty fields of France."

"But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraiséd spirit that hath dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within *this wooden O* the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
On your imaginary forces work.
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,
Whose high-upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous, narrow ocean parts asunder.
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
Into a thousand parts divide one man,
And make imaginary puissance.
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth,
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass."

In "As You Like It" it is an actor who tells us at the opening of the second act that we are now to imagine the Forest of Arden before us. In the first sentence which

the banished Duke speaks, he says, "Are not *these woods* more free from peril than the envious court?" and a moment later, when Touchstone and the runaway maidens first enter the woods, Rosalind exclaims, "Well, this is the Forest of Arden!" A hint, a reference, a few simple contrivances, a placard or two, — these are enough. "Imaginary forces" are here in the audience keenly alive, and they will do the rest. By means of them, without the illusion of scenery, the bare wooden stage will become a ship, a garden, a palace, a London tavern. Whole armies will enter and retire by a single door. Battles will rage, royal processions pass in and out, graves will be dug, lovers will woo, — and all with hardly an important alteration of the setting. Lack of scenery does not limit the type of scenes that can be presented. On the contrary, it gives almost unlimited opportunities to the dramatist, for the spectators, in the force and freshness of their imagination, are children who willingly "play" that the stage is anything the author suggests. Their youthful enthusiasm, their simple tastes, above all their lack of knowledge of anything different, give them the enviable power of imagining the grandest, most beautiful, and most varied scenes on the same bare, unadorned boards. Apparently they are well satisfied with their stage; for it is not until nearly fifty years after Shakespeare's death that movable scenery is used in an English theatre.

The performance of a play.

It is now three o'clock and time for the performance to begin. Among the motley crowd of men and boys in the yard there is no longer room for another box or stool. They are evidently growing impatient and jostle together in noisy confusion. Suddenly three long blasts on a trumpet sound. The

mutterings in the pit subside, and all eyes turn toward the stage. First an actor, clothed in a black mantle and wearing a laurel wreath on his head, comes from behind the curtain and recites the prologue. From it we learn something of the story of the play to follow, and possibly a little about the scene of action. This is all very welcome, for we have no programs and the plot of the drama is unfamiliar. In a minute or two the Prologue retires and the actors of the first scene enter. We are soon impressed by the rapidity with which the play moves on. There is little stage "business"; though there may be some music between the acts, still there are no long waits; one scene follows another as quickly as the actors can make their exits and entrances. The whole play, therefore, does not last much over two hours. At the close there is an epilogue, spoken by one of the actors, after which the players kneel and join in a prayer for the queen. Then comes a final bit of amusement for the groundlings: the clown, or some other comic character of the company, sings a popular song, dances a brisk and boisterous jig, and the performance of the day is done.

Costumes of the actors.

During our novel experience this afternoon at the Globe, nothing has probably surprised us more than the elaborate and gorgeous costumes of the actors. At a time when so little attention is paid to scenery we naturally expect to find the dress of the players equally simple and plain. But we are mistaken. The costumes, to be sure, make little or no pretension to fit the period or place of action. Caesar appears in clothes such as are worn by a duke or an earl in 1601. "They are the ordinary dresses of various classes of the day, but they are often of rich material, and

in the height of current fashion. False hair and beards, crowns and sceptres, mitres and croziers, armour, helmets, shields, vizors, and weapons of war, hoods, bands, and cassocks, are relied on to indicate among the characters differences of rank or profession. The foreign observer, Thomas Platter of Basle, was impressed by the splendor of the actors' costumes. 'The players wear the most costly and beautiful dresses, for it is the custom in England, that when noblemen or knights die, they leave their finest clothes to their servants, who, since it would not be fitting for them to wear such splendid garments, sell them soon afterwards to the players for a small sum.'"[1] But no money is spared to secure the fitting garment for an important part. Indeed, it is quite probable that more is paid for a king's velvet robe or a prince's silken doublet than is given to the author for the play itself. Whether the elaborate costumes are appropriate or not, their general effect is pleasing, for they give variety and brilliant color to the bare and unattractive stage.

Female parts taken by boys.

If we are happily surprised by the costuming of the play, what shall we say of the actors who take the female parts! They are very evidently not women, or even girls, but boys whose voices have not changed, dressed, tricked out, and trained to appear as feminine as possible. It is considered unseemly for a woman to appear on a public stage, — indeed, the professional actress does not exist and will not be seen in an English theatre for nearly a century. Meanwhile plays are written with few female parts (remember "The Merchant of Venice," "Julius Caesar," and "Macbeth") and young boys are trained to take these

[1] Sidney Lee: "Shakespeare and the Modern Stage," page 41.

rôles. The theatregoers seem to enjoy the performance just as much as we do to-day with mature and accomplished actresses on the stage. Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists treated the situation with good grace or indifference. Thus in the epilogue of "As You Like It" Rosalind says to the audience, "*If I were a woman* I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me." The jest, of course, consists in the fact that she is *not* a woman at all, but a stripling. In a more tragic vein Cleopatra, before she dies, complains that "the quick comedians . . . will stage us, . . . and I shall see some *squeaking Cleopatra boy my* greatness." It may be that the boys who take the women's parts this afternoon wear masks to make them seem less masculine, though how that can improve the situation it is difficult to understand. There is an amusing reference to this practice in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." When Flute, the bellows-mender, is assigned a part in the drama which the mechanics of Athens are rehearsing, he exclaims, "Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming"; to which protest Quince replies, "That's all one: you shall play it *in a mask*, and you may speak as small as you will."

The audience at the Globe.

Though rapid action, brilliant costumes, and, above all, the force and beauty of the lines, may lead us to forget that the heroine is only a boy, it is more difficult to keep our attention from being distracted by the audience around us. It surprises us that there are so few women present. We notice, too, that many of those who have come wear a mask of silk or velvet over their faces. Evidently it is hardly the proper thing for a respectable woman to be seen in a public theatre. The people in the balconies are

fairly orderly, but below in the pit the crowd is restless, noisy, and at times even boisterous. Bricklayers, dock-laborers, apprentices, serving-men, and idlers stand in jostling confusion. There are no police and no laws that are enforced. Pickpockets ply an active trade. One, we see, has been caught and is bound to the railing at the edge of the stage where he is an object of coarse jests and ridicule. Refreshment-sellers push about in the throng with apples and sausages, nuts and ale. There is much eating and drinking and plenty of smoking. On the stage the gallants are a constant source of bother to the players. They interrupt the Prologue, criticise the dress of the hero, banter the heroine, and joke with the clown. Even here in the gallery we can hear their comments — far from flattering — upon a scene that does not please them; when a little later they applaud, their praises are just as vigorous. Once it seems as though the play is going to be brought to a standstill by a wrangling quarrel between one of these rakish gentlemen and a group of groundlings near the stage. Their attention, however, is taken by the entrance of the leading actor declaiming a stirring passage, and their differences are soon forgotten. It is, on the whole, a good-natured rough crowd of the common people, the lower and middle classes from the great city across the river, — more like the crowd one sees to-day at a circus or a professional ball-game than at a theatre of the highest type. They loudly cheer the clown's final song and dance, and then with laughter, shouting, and jesting they pour out of the yard and in a moment the building is empty. The play is over until to-morrow afternoon.

What a contrast it all has been to a play in a theatre of

the twentieth century! When we think of the uncomfortable benches, the flat bare earth of the pit, the lack of scenery, footlights, and drop curtains; when we hear the shrill voices of boys piping the women's parts, and see mist and rain falling on spectator's heads, we are inclined to pity the playgoer of Elizabethan times. Yet he needs no pity. To him the theatre of his day was sufficient. The drama enacted there was a source of intense and genuine pleasure. His keen enthusiasm; his fresh, youthful eagerness; above all, his highly imaginative power, — far greater than ours to-day, — gave him an ability to understand and enjoy the poetry and dramatic force of Shakespeare's works, which we, with all the improvements of our palatial theatres, cannot equal. Crude, simple, coarse as they now seem to us, we can look back only with admiration upon the Swan and the Curtain and the Globe; for in them "The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," "Julius Caesar," "Hamlet," and "Macbeth" were received with acclamations of joy and wonder. In them the genius of Shakespeare was recognized and given a place in the drama of England which now, after three centuries have passed, it holds in the theatres and in the literature of all the world.

Conclusions to be drawn.

BOOKS OF INTEREST TO STUDENTS OF SHAKESPEARE

[A bibliography of works on Shakespeare would make a volume of considerable size. Here are a few of the most useful books for students and teachers.]

William Shakespeare: A Critical Study.
GEORGE BRANDES. The Macmillan Co.

A Life of William Shakespeare.
SIDNEY LEE. The Macmillan Co.

The Facts about Shakespeare.
NEILSON AND THORNDIKE. The Macmillan Co.

William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist, and Man.
H. W. MABIE. The Macmillan Co.

Shakespeare and the Modern Stage.
SIDNEY LEE. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Introduction to Shakespeare.
EDWARD DOWDEN. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Shakespeare.
WALTER RALEIGH. The Macmillan Co.

William Shakespeare.
JOHN MASEFIELD. Henry Holt & Co.

Shakespeare: The Boy.
W. J. ROLFE. Harper Bros.

Handbook to the Works of Shakespeare.
MORTON LUCE. George Bell & Sons.

Shakespeare: his Life, Art, and Characters.
REV. H. N. HUDSON. Ginn & Co.

Shakespeare's England.
WILLIAM WINTER. Moffat, Yard & Co.

Shakespeare Manual.
F. G. FLEAY. The Macmillan Co.

An interesting story of Shakespeare's times is *Master Skylark*, by JOHN BENNETT, published by The Century Company.

Scott's *Kenilworth* is a story of London and Warwickshire in 1575, and *The Fortunes of Nigel* gives a good picture of London in 1604, the year of "Othello."

EXPLANATORY NOTES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ = *persons of the drama; the cast.*

Notice that the cast is printed according to rank and social distinction. First we have the Duke, next the Princes, then the more important merchants, and so on down to the servants. The women, again in order of social rank, are placed together after all of the male characters. How does this arrangement differ from the program of a modern play?

The only difficult names to pronounce are Gratiano (Grashiáno), Balthásar, and Stepháno. With the exception of Shylock and Tubal, Shakespeare found the names of his characters in the Italian stories of his day.

The **Magnificoes** were the powerful nobles of Venice.

Portia's **seat** is her abode, mansion, or estate.

on the Continent. That is, in contrast to Venice, which is situated on more than a hundred small islands between the mouths of the Piave and the Po.

ACT I

Scene 1

In the first edition of "The Merchant of Venice," published in the late fall of 1600, the play is not divided into either acts or scenes, and even in the Folio of 1623 the acts alone are indicated. The divisions into scenes have been made by later editors. (See page 184, on the presentation of a Shakespearian play.)

Venice. Shakespeare wrote "The Merchant" probably in 1596 or 1597, and we may suppose that the scene is laid in the

Venice of those years. Although by the poet's time this great city had fallen from the height of its former glory and influence, she still "held the gorgeous East in fee," and was one of the great maritime powers of the earth. Her merchants traded with the whole civilized world. Her wealth, her magnificent palaces, her painters, poets, sculptors, and lordly dukes were known and admired throughout Europe. It is barely possible that Shakespeare had visited Italy himself and had seen Venice in all her beauty and glory; but even if he had not, his imagination must have been fired by the tales of travellers and by the books of his day, which pictured the life of Italy more than of any European country.

A street. Remember that only about a third of the streets of Venice are canals, though the paved roads and fine squares are often flooded by the high tides of the Adriatic.

Enter ANTONIO, etc. It is probably forenoon, an hour or two before dinner. Halpin sets the time of the opening at eleven o'clock in the morning. (For further discussion of the time duration of the play, see page 106 and also the notes at the opening of each scene.)

LINE **1. In sooth**: in truth, truly. Thus the word "soothsayer" originally meant one who said what was true.

4. whereof: where. Note the frequent use of this word throughout the play, and also of "withal," where we should use merely "where" and "with."

6. want-wit. Literally, one who lacks knowledge or sense, — a scatterbrains, or possibly an idiot. Other similar compound forms that Shakespeare uses are "a lack-love," "a make-peace," "this break-promise," "this break-vow."

7. ado: trouble.

9. argosies: large merchant vessels. The word is in no way connected with the word *Argo*, as one might suppose, but is derived from the city of Ragusa, in sixteenth-century English spelled "Aragouse" and "Arragosa." The merchant vessels of this Italian city were often seen in English harbors in Shakespeare's time. **portly**: stately and swelling.

10. signiors . . . burghers: great and powerful lords of the ocean.

11. pageants of the sea. Originally pageants were large platforms drawn about the streets and used as stages for acting the miracle plays. They have been compared to our "floats" in parades.

12. overpeer: look down upon. **petty traffickers**: small trading vessels.

15. venture: risk, speculation, — as in business language to-day. **forth**: out, abroad. So later Shylock says, "I am bid *forth* to supper."

17. still: ever, perpetually.

18. sits the wind: not the direction from which, but the quarter towards which, the wind is blowing.

19. roads: haven, harbor, — as in Hampton *Roads* and *road-stead*.

23. a'-gue: a condition of cold, trembling, and fever.

25. sandy hour-glass: a device for measuring time by running fine sand through the narrow neck of a glass vessel. Similar instruments may be bought to-day for measuring three or five minutes when cooking eggs. Look up "hour-glass" and "clepsydra" in any large encyclopædia. You will find "Ancient Methods of Telling Time" an interesting subject for a theme or a talk.

27. Andrew: the name of Salarino's imaginary vessel.

28. vailing: lowering.

29. burial: burial place or grave.

31. bethink me straight: think at once, straightway.

35–36. now . . . now. The costly spices and silks which, until the vessel struck, were his, now suddenly vanish from his possession. Were you acting the part of Salarino, how would you read these lines, and what gestures would you make?

38. bechanced: having happened.

42. bottom, — of the ship, for the ship itself. Compare this figure (metonymy) with "a fleet of twenty **sail**."

44. upon the fortune. That is, trusted to the fortune.

50. Janus. The Roman god of gates and entrances. He was generally figured as facing both ways, often with one laughing face and one of serious features.

52. peep through their eyes, — which are wrinkled and half shut with laughter.

54. other: others.

56. Nestor. Inasmuch as Nestor was the oldest and gravest of the Greek warriors, a jest that he considered laughable would naturally be very amusing.

61. prevented: anticipated, got ahead of me.

64. embrace the occasion: take this opportunity.

67. exceeding strange: a great stranger to us.

70. dinner-time. In Shakespeare's London of 1597 this would have been probably about eleven A.M.

74. respect upon: regard for.

75. it: the "world" of the previous line.

78. A stage, etc. Compare these lines of Antonio with the famous speech by Jacques in "As You Like It," beginning "All the world's a stage." Why was it natural for Shakespeare to compare life to acting on the stage?

79. play the fool. It would be a monstrous mistake to understand "fool" in its modern sense. Gratiano wants to play the part of the *jester*, or professional fun-maker, of the plays in Shakespeare's day, such as Touchstone in "As You Like It," or Launcelot in this comedy. If you have read "Ivanhoe," you will remember that Wamba was far from a fool or simpleton.

82. mortifying: causing death.

84. cut in alabaster. "Why should I be as cold and hard as a marble effigy on the tomb of my grandfather?"

86. peevish: cross, disagreeable, difficult to please.

88. visages: faces.

89. a standing pond: a stagnant, sluggish pool. "Some men's faces," says Gratiano, "are masked and hidden by affected looks of wisdom and gravity, much as a stagnant pool is covered with slime."

90. entertain: maintain an obstinate silence.

91–92. opinion of wisdom: reputation for wisdom.

92. conceit. Not *pride*, but in its original sense of "thought," "mental ability."

93. As who should say: like one who should say.

96. are reputed wise. That is, there are people whose reputation for wisdom depends solely on their saying nothing.

98. would almost damn those ears. According to Scripture (Matt. v. 22), "Whoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." It is of this verse that Gratiano is thinking when he says that those who could not refrain from calling their silent brothers fools would probably be damned.

101. melancholy bait: the "wilful stillness,"—the obstinate silence and sadness.

102. this fool gudgeon. A stupid fish easily caught, and worth nothing when taken.

104. exhortation: sermon; lecture of advice.

108. moe: more, as often in Shakespeare.

110. for this gear: for this matter.

114. an infinite deal: a huge amount.

116. chaff: the husks of grain. You remember the lines in "The Village Blacksmith":

> "They love to see the flaming forge,
> And hear the bellows roar,
> And catch the burning sparks that fly
> Like *chaff* from the threshing floor."

120. swore a secret pilgrimage. What do you know about pilgrims and vows to make secret pilgrimages? Any good encyclopædia will help you out.

124. something . . . a more swelling port: by living somewhat beyond my means. **Port**: style of living.

126. make moan to be abridged. I do not complain now that I am cut down or curtailed.

129. prodigal: extravagant, wasteful.

130. gaged: bound, engaged, pledged.

132. warranty: right, warrant.

136. still: always, as in line 17.

137. within the eye of honor. That is, "You stand in range of what can be viewed, or considered, honorable." What figure of speech is this?

140. shaft: arrow. Archery was a much more popular sport in 1600 than it is to-day.

141. self-same flight. Bassanio chose for his second arrow one that was feathered and tipped to **fly the same distance** as the one he had lost.

142. adviséd: careful.

143. forth: out, as in line 15.

144. childhood proof: this test of my childhood days.

145. pure innocence. Of this expression Dr. Furness says, "I think it is by no means certain that 'pure innocence' does not mean here 'pure foolishness.' Bassanio assuredly was aware how flimsy was his pretext for Antonio to send more good money after bad, and that his best argument was drawn from childish games." The fact that four other interpretations of these words are possible illustrates well the differences of opinion among editors of Shakespeare. Can you think of any of the other meanings?

148. self: same.

151. latter hazard: your second risk, — that is, the money now wanted.

153. herein: in these words of yours.

154. circumstance: circumlocution, "beating about the bush," round-about talk.

156. making question, etc. "You wrong me," says Antonio, "by doubting my willingness to do everything for you within my power."

160. prest unto it: ready to do it.

165. nothing undervalued: in no way inferior to Cato's daughter.

166. Brutus' Portia. If you have read "Julius Caesar," written by Shakespeare a few years after "The Merchant of Venice," you will remember the important parts played by Brutus and by his wife Portia in that tragedy.

170. like a golden fleece. In III, 2, Gratiano refers again to the story of the Argonauts, when he says to Salerio, "We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece." Colchos, or Colchis, was a country at the eastern end of the Black Sea. There it was that Jason found the Golden Fleece and the sorceress Medea. You should know the beautiful old story of Jason and the Argo, of Medea and old Æson. References to it occur throughout English literature, and even in the daily papers. "As cruel and envious as Medea." — *Boston Herald.*

171. seat: estate, residence. (See Dramatis Personæ.)

175. presages me such thrift. I have a feeling, we should say, which promises me success.

178. commodity: property, merchandise.

181. racked: stretched, strained.

183. presently: instantly, at once, — as often in Shakespeare.

185. my trust or for my sake. "I do not doubt my ability," says Antonio, "to obtain the money either on my credit as a business man, or as a personal favor."

184–185. make . . . sake. Notice that the last two lines rhyme. See also the last lines of the following three scenes, and find other places where the "rhyme tag" occurs. This practice of rhyming at the close of a scene was common in Shakespeare's time. It served as a climax or final flourish, — a sort of signal that one episode of the play was over and another was about to begin. We can better understand the purpose of this "rhyme tag," or signal, when we remember that in a play of 1600 one scene followed directly after another, without a wait, without music, without a curtain, and with but little or no changing of scenery. (See page 184, for a fuller account of the acting of an Elizabethan play.)

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the scene at the opening of the play as you imagine it.

2. "In Charles Keane's fine revival of this play at the Princess's Theatre in 1858," Dr. Furness writes, "the curtain draws up on a scene laid in St. Mark's Place, with various groups of Nobles, Citizens, Merchants, Water-Carriers, Flower-Girls, etc., passing and repassing." Would this be effective? Would it be Shakespearian? (See page 178.)

3. What do you think Antonio and his friends have been talking about just before they enter? What words show you plainly that we do not hear the beginning of their conversation?

4. Why do you think the poet dwells at such length on Antonio's sadness? Does it seem to you that it "casts a shadow before" of some misfortune to come later in the story?

5. What are the three suggestions offered by the merchant's friends to account for his melancholy? Do you think one of them is the correct explanation? Have you any others to offer?

6. In what way is Lorenzo's further connection with the plot suggested?

7. What bearing does Antonio's comparison of the world with a stage have upon the fact that Shakespeare was both a playwright and an actor?

8. One of the most famous passages in the poet's works begins with these lines:

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players:
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages."
>
> —*As You Like It*, II, 7, 139.

Compare these lines with Antonio's explanation of his sadness, and also consider them in relation to the previous question.

9. What opinion do you form of Gratiano? What is his most striking characteristic? Do you like him?

10. At what point does the chaffing of the friends cease, and the main plot begin to develop? Why not strike into the heart of the story in the opening speeches?

11. Tell in your own words the story of Bassanio's financial troubles. Do you form, on the whole, a high opinion of this friend of Antonio?

12. How does the poet arouse your interest in Portia?

13. By what device does Shakespeare leave us in a state of suspense at the end of Scene 1?

14. How much of the plot has this scene unfolded for us?

15. Are you more interested in Bassanio or Antonio? Give your reasons.

16. Quote any lines that you specially like.

ACT I

Scene 2

Belmont. Shakespeare did not originate this name. In the Italian book, "Il Pecorone," from which probably came the story of the Jew of Venice, the home of the rich heiress is in *Belmonte* (See page 98.)

Enter PORTIA. We may imagine that this scene takes place on the very morning that Bassanio appealed to his friend for money to fit out an expedition to go to Belmont.

1. By my troth: in truth, verily. Compare this speech by Portia with Antonio's first words in the play, "In sooth, I know not why I am so sad."

5. surfeit: to indulge in anything (especially food) to excess.

7. seated in the mean: placed in comfortable circumstances, neither poor nor rich. Note the play on the word *mean*.

8–9. superfluity, etc. That is, a very wealthy man grows gray early; those of moderate "means" live to a good old age.

10. sentences: rules, maxims.

17. blood. Used figuratively, as often to-day, for the body or the passions. "He did the deed in cold *blood*."

18. such a hare, etc. Work out for yourself the interesting and picturesque comparison of the hot-blooded wildness of youth

with the hare. Why, for instance, does Portia call "good counsel" a "cripple"?

20. is not in the fashion: is not of a character to choose a husband for me.

23–24. will . . . will. Here is another pun. Punning today seems to us the "lowest form of wit." We almost invariably associate it with those who are ever trying to be funny, but with poor success. The people of Shakespeare's day, on the contrary, seem to have taken a keen delight in playing on the similarity of words, even in serious conversation. You will therefore find many puns in this drama, none, however, more out of place, from our twentieth-century point of view, than those in which Shylock and Antonio, at most tragic moments, pun on the words *damn* and *heart* (III, I, 29–30; IV, I, 274–275).

29. whereof who chooses, etc. That is, whoever solves the riddle of the three caskets wins you.

34. thee. In Shakespeare's day *thou* and *thee* were used in conversation chiefly to servants and when expressing contempt or scorn. They were also sometimes used when speaking to very intimate friends, as here.

36. level at: guess at, judge of.

37. Neapolitan: pertaining to, or coming from Naples. The Neapolitans were noted horsemen in the sixteenth century.

39. makes it a great appropriation, etc. The prince is proud of the fact that he can shoe his horse.

42. County: Count, — as often in Shakespeare.

44. "If you will not have me, choose": This obscure line has been explained in a dozen ways by the editors, none of them wholly satisfactory. One says that something is probably omitted after "choose," which Portia expresses by a gesture. Dr. Furness would omit the comma after "me," thus giving to Palatine's speech the threat, — "If you will not let me choose, — well, take the consequences then!" How would you manage it if you were to play the part of Portia?

45. the weeping philosopher: Heraclitus of Ephesus (about 500 B.C.), so called from his solemn bearing and sad views of life.

50. by: concerning, with regard to.

56. throstle: an English song-thrush.

60. requite: reward, — or here almost "return his affections."

64. he hath neither Latin, etc. He speaks neither Latin, French, etc. Remember that in 1597 Latin was still a living, spoken language in all the countries of Europe. No later than 1623, the year of the publication of Shakespeare's collected plays, Lord Bacon printed his *translation into Latin* of one of his earlier works, apparently believing that Latin would survive among learned men longer than common every-day English.

67. proper: handsome.

68. dumb-show: a pantomime, — often, as in "Hamlet," introduced into Elizabethan plays. **suited**: dressed.

69. doublet. "The doublet (so called from being originally lined or wadded for defence) was a close-fitting coat, with skirts reaching a little below the girdle. The *round hose* were coverings for the legs, not the feet. The phrase 'doublet and hose' is equivalent to 'coat and breeches.'" (W. J. Rolfe.)

70. bonnet. It is only in the United States, and here only recently, that the word bonnet has come to be applied exclusively to the headwear of women.

76. sealed under for another. That is, for another box on the ear.

84. make shift: manage.

89. rhenish wine: a white wine made from grapes grown in the valley of the Rhine. **the contrary casket.** That is, the casket, or one of the caskets, which did *not* contain Portia's picture.

92. a sponge. Lady Macbeth in the tragedy "Macbeth" calls certain drunken men "spongy officers." Compare this with our American slang "soaked," and a "soak."

97. sort: way, method. **imposition**: the conditions imposed by Portia's father.

99. Sibylla. Just as Gratiano in Scene 1 referred to Nestor as a sort of typical wise old man, here Portia uses the Sibyl (probably the Sibyl of Cumæ) as a type of old age in woman.

Apollo granted to the Cumæan Sibyl as many years of life as the grains of sand which she could hold in her hand.

100. Diana. The goddess of the moon and of hunting. She never married. She is referred to again by Lorenzo in V, 1, 66.

101. parcel. Portia speaks half playfully, half contemptuously. In the language of the American schoolboy what would be the equivalent of this word as it is used here?

117. forerunner. Notice later in the play how often servants are sent ahead to tell of their masters' approach. What takes the place of "forerunners" to-day? In this connection it will be interesting to look up the word "harbinger" in a large dictionary.

122. condition: character, disposition.

123. complexion of a devil. This refers, of course, to the dark, swarthy complexion of the prince who has been announced.

123–124. shrive me than wive me. That is, hear my confession and give me absolution rather than marry me. Here we have again a play on words, this time on their sound rather than on their meaning.

125. Sirrah: fellow, sir. Spoken only to servants, or in contempt.

127. door. Notice the rhyme, **door** and **before**, at the end of the scene. See note on **make** and **sake** on page 199.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Portia is "aweary of this great world"? Has she cause for worry? Compare her mood here with Antonio's in the previous scene, — especially with the merchant's first speech in the play.

2. How do you imagine Portia and Nerissa occupied while discussing the suitors?

3. How old do you think Portia is? Defend your answer.

4. What is your explanation of her father's arrangement of the lottery of the caskets?

5. Why do you think Portia does not seem to feel insulted by being forbidden to choose the husband she wished?

6. What is her attitude in general toward her father's will ?

7. What light is thrown upon Portia's character by her description of the suitors?

8. By what method does Shakespeare give us clear-cut pictures of " this parcel of wooers "?

9. Is there anything of special interest in what Portia says of Falconbridge ?

10. Does Portia know in which casket her picture is locked ? Prove your answer by quoting from her description of the German.

11. Why do you think the suitors departed without choosing ? Why have them mentioned at all ? What purpose do they serve in developing character and plot ?

12. What is the effect of having Nerissa speak of Bassanio ?

13. Is there anything significant in Portia's words, " Yes, yes, it was Bassanio " ?

14. How would you have her speak these words ? Also the next passage, beginning, " I remember him well "?

15. What is it that somehow has made you like Portia very much already ?

16. What are evidently her relations with Nerissa ?

17. In what way has this scene advanced the plot ? What other more important purpose does it have ?

18. Does this scene have any definite connection with the one before ? What is it ? In what way does it point forward to future developments ?

ACT I

Scene 3

Enter BASSANIO. We may imagine that this meeting between Bassanio and Shylock takes place very soon after Antonio and Bassanio parted at the end of Scene 1. At any rate, it is still before dinner. (See line 33.)

1. ducats (dŭck'-uts). The Venetian ducat of Shakespeare's

time about equalled the American dollar in value. **well**: this, and the following "wells," must be read slowly and thoughtfully. Shylock is meditating, of course, whether or not to lend the money.

7. May you stead me? Are you able to help me?

12. a good man: a man of sound credit and good business standing. Bassanio evidently takes "good" in another sense.

16. sufficient: financially sound.

17. in supposition. The ships are "subjects of conjecture," not actually at hand or certainly safe.

18. Tripolis. Not the African Tripolis, but Tripoli in Syria, a city that formerly did extensive trading with Venice. **Indies**: the American or West Indies.

19. the Rialto. An English traveller, Thomas Coryat (1577–1617), thus describes the Rialto in his volume entitled *Crudities:* "The Rialto, which is at the farthest side of the bridge as you come from St. Mark's, is a most stately building, being the Exchange of Venice, where the Venetian gentlemen and the merchants doe meete twice a day, betwixt eleven and twelve of the clocke in the morning, and betwixt five and sixe of the clocke in the afternoone." (Quoted from the Variorum Edition.)

[It is interesting to know that this early traveller, Thomas Coryat, who went from Palestine to India largely on foot, was the man who introduced the common table fork into England.]

21. squandered: scattered.

29. I will bethink me: I will consider this matter carefully.

31. to smell pork. Spoken bitterly, for Jews, of course, never eat pork. **the habitation**: the body or flesh, — here of swine.

32. Nazarite: Jesus of Nazareth. "So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out they went into the herd of swine." (Matt. viii. 31–32.) [See also Mark v. 13 and Luke viii. 13.]

38. a fawning publican. The adjective "fawning" is suggested to Shylock by the warmth of the affectionate greeting

between the two merchants. The publicans, or Roman tax-collectors, were bitterly hated by the Jews. Antonio, of course, is not a publican, nor does he fawn upon Bassanio; the terms simply express in a general way Shylock's hatred of the merchant.

39. for he is: for being; because he is.

41. gratis: freely, for nothing.

42. usance: usury, interest. To lend money for interest was still considered in Shakespeare's day a base and wicked thing. "It is against Nature for money to beget money." In 1597 "interest" and "usury" were therefore synonymous terms. One of the reasons why Antonio despises Shylock is because he is a professional money-lender. The laws then permitted certain Jews to ply this trade, — indeed, it was often the only one open to them, — though it caused them to be even more bitterly hated and persecuted.

To-day no one feels any scruples against taking a fair interest on money that is lent; whereas we use the word "usury" for exorbitantly high and often illegal rates of interest. Unless you understand clearly this change of attitude toward money lending and "usance" since Shakespeare wrote, you will fail to appreciate the feelings of an audience of 1597 toward Shylock and his relations with Antonio.

43. upon the hip: a figure from wrestling. A man caught upon his opponent's hip was almost sure to be thrown. (See IV, 1, 328.)

48. he calls interest. See note above on **usance.** Notice that Shylock calls this "interest," or "usury," "my well-won thrift," — an expression that would provoke a jeer or a hiss from an Elizabethan audience.

50. of: about.

52. the gross: the sum total.

54. Tubal. Notice the appropriateness of the names chosen by Shakespeare for his characters. Genesis (x. 2) tells us that Tubal was one of the sons of Japheth.

56. Rest you fair: "Heaven grant you fair fortune!" Shylock pretends that he has just seen Antonio for the first time.

57. in our mouths. Compare this expression with "on the tip of one's tongue."

59. excess: anything above the sum borrowed.

60. ripe wants: wants that must be supplied at once. To what are the "wants" indirectly compared?

61–62. Is he yet possessed, etc. Is he informed how much you need?

66. methought: it seemed to me, I thought

67. upon advantage: for gain to yourself.

68. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep, etc. The story of Jacob serving his uncle Laban is told in Gen. xxix and xxx. See especially Gen. xxx, 30–41. Rebekah, Jacob's "wise mother," helped her favorite son to win his father's blessing, thus setting Esau aside, and making Jacob the "third possessor," or third heir in direct line from Abraham.

75. Laban and himself were compromised, etc. Laban agreed to reward Jacob for his faithful service by giving him all the new-born lambs, or "eanlings," that were striped and spotted, — "streaked and pied."

83. inserted. That is, "Was this story of Jacob and Laban put into the Bible to justify usury?"

84. ewes: female sheep.

87. The devil can cite Scripture, etc. In Mat. iv. 6, the Devil, tempting Jesus, "saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee," etc. These last words the Devil quotes from Psalm xci, thus "citing Scripture for his purpose."

88. producing holy witness: offering proofs from sacred authority.

89. a villain with a smiling cheek. Compare this with Hamlet's famous denunciation of his uncle:

> "O villain, villain, smiling, damnéd villain!
> My tables, — meet it as I set it down,
> That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain."

94. beholding to you: beholden, bound, obliged to you for your money.

96. rated: berated, rebuked.

97. usances. Here, as earlier in the scene, the word means simply "interest," or "rates of interest."

98. still: always, — as we have already seen.

99. sufferance: patient endurance, submission. In Shakespeare's time all Jews were obliged by law to wear yellow caps in public places. In his acting copy of the play, Edwin Booth wrote against this line, — "Showing his yellow cap," — the badge of his race.

101. gaberdine: a coarse, loose outer garment.

104. Go to. A common phrase in Shakespeare, about equivalent to our "well." Here spoken scornfully. (See II, 2, 149.)

105. moneys. Shylock, quoting Antonio's words in contempt, uses the plural here, and again in line 120, with the singular verb **is**.

106. void your rheum: spit. Do you feel that there is anything gained by using the expression "void your rheum" instead of the shorter and simpler "spit"?

112. in a bondman's key: in a voice, or tone, of a slave.

113. bated: abated, low, whispered.

123. A breed for barren metal. That is, interest money made or bred from the principal loaned. Antonio here harps again on the common belief of ancient times that it was against nature for money to beget money by interest. He therefore calls metal "barren."

125. break: break his day, fail to keep his agreement. Though the grammatical construction of the sentence is not permissible in modern English, the meaning is clear enough.

129. doit: a small coin worth a quarter of a cent.

133. a notary: an officer in England empowered by law to register deeds and to **make note** of bonds and other instruments, upon which he places his signature and **seal** to make them legal.

134. your single bond: your own bond without any surety. **merry sport.** One of the stanzas in the old ballad of "Gernutus," which Shakespeare probably had read, begins with the line:

"But we will have a *merry jest*." (See p. 101.)

138. nominated for an equal: named as an equivalent, or exact pound of your flesh.

141. i'faith: in faith, truly, "in sooth," "by my troth."

144. dwell in: remain in.

149. O father Abram, etc. Should these words of Shylock be spoken as an aside, or to Antonio and Bassanio?

150. teaches. Not an error of grammar, but an old English plural in *es* that survived in certain words until Shakespeare's time.

155. estimable: valuable. We apply the word to-day only to persons.

156. muttons, beefs: sheep and oxen.

158. so: so be it, well and good.

159. And, for my love, etc. "And as regards my friendly motive in this business, do not misunderstand me." (Dr. F. B. Gummere.) This is perhaps the simplest of the many explanations given of Shylock's puzzling words.

161. forthwith: immediately, without delay.

163. purse: put into a purse. **straight**: straightway.

164. fearful: to be feared, untrustworthy.

165. knave. This word, which originally meant only a boy (Ger. *Knabe*), now is used only for a rascal, a rogue. Both uses were common with Shakespeare. What does Shylock evidently mean here?

169. terms: this may refer either to the kind words of Shylock, or to the agreements in the bond. Which do you prefer?

168–171. Notice the two pairs of rhymes at the end of the scene. Compare this with other scene endings throughout the play, and see note on the last line of Scene 1 of this act.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give as many reasons as you can for placing the scene at Belmont between the scene which shows us Antonio and Bassanio starting out to borrow money, and this interview with Shylock.

2. What marked contrasts are there between this scene and the previous one? What effect do they have?

3. Picture the scene and the bearing of Bassanio and Shylock as they enter talking. How would you act the part of Shylock at this point?

4. What shows clearly that we first hear the middle of a conversation? What do you think has already passed between Bassanio and the Jew?

5. Upon what do you think Shylock is pondering? How would you have him speak his first four speeches? Defend your interpretation.

6. What is the dramatic purpose of Shylock's "aside"? (38–49.) What are the merchants doing meanwhile? How would you arrange this on the stage to make it seem natural?

7. At what point do you think Shylock's scheme for entrapping Antonio first shows itself?

8. Give Antonio's reasons for never lending money with interest. Why do we have so little sympathy with his attitude to-day?

9. What are Shylock's chief reasons for hating the merchant? Do you have any sympathy for him?

10. Discuss Antonio's treatment of Shylock. (See page 103.)

11. Can you defend the merchant? Is your respect for him lowered in consequence of his treatment of the Jew?

12. What makes you feel certain that Shylock is speaking the truth, even without exaggeration?

13. What do you think of Shylock's offer, "I would be friends with you," etc.?

14. What will you say of his phrase "in merry sport"?

15. Why do you think Shylock's proposition of the pound of flesh affects Antonio so little, when it seems so abominable and disgusting to us?

16. Does Bassanio object very strenuously to his friend's signing the bond? Discuss his part in the transaction.

17. Why do you think the merchants do not see through Shylock's trickery and appreciate his real motives?

18. Do they seem as much surprised as we should expect at Shylock's lending three thousand ducats without interest?

19. Is Shylock, in your judgment, just taking a chance of getting Antonio into his power, or do you think he has already heard of the merchant's ventures at sea, and possibly of some disasters? Give reasons for your opinion.

20. In what general way does Shylock impress you throughout the scene? Think of adjectives to describe his character as you understand it.

21. Which one of the three men of this scene do you find most interesting? Why?

22. Which of these three parts do you feel demands the greatest skill and power in acting?

23. Notice the change from prose to verse form at line 38. Can you account for this change? What effect does it have? (See II, 2, 158, and other similar places throughout the drama.)

24. Quote the three passages you like best and explain your choice.

25. "The dramatic skill of Shakespeare in these three scenes is striking enough. First, we have sad Antonio and the romantic quest of Bassanio. Secondly, there is Portia, mocking her own solicitude in light play of wit over a more than grave situation, with the pretty half-confession about Bassanio. Now comes this Shylock, striking straight into the two motives — friendship and love — with a tragic threat so admirable in its weaving that we utterly forget the flimsy material, the absurd character of that merry bond. Exposition, the object of a first act, was never better achieved than here." (Dr. Francis B. Gummere.)

Discuss this paragraph. Point out other ways in which "the dramatic skill of Shakespeare in these three scenes" is shown. Explain more fully the last sentence of the quotation.

ACT II

Scene 1

This scene may follow directly after Scene 2 of the previous act, or possibly the next morning.

Flourish of cornets: a call, or a few notes, on trumpets or cornets.

1. mislike: dislike, which Shakespeare generally uses. **complexion**. Do not picture the Prince of Morocco as black, or as a negro, but rather as a gallant and imposing figure with dark, swarthy complexion. The stage-direction in the First Folio edition says here: "Enter Morochus, a *tawnie* Moore, all in white," etc.

2. The shadowed livery, etc. The Prince says that his complexion is the darkened uniform, or tan, of the dazzling sun.

5. Phœbus, or Phœbus Apollo: the sun-god, the sun.

6. incision for your love. Red blood was generally considered a sign of courage and noble birth. Cowards, on the contrary, "have livers white as milk." (See III, 2, 86.)

8. aspéct: countenance, face. Try to read the line with the accent on the first syllable. What happens to the rhythm and meter?

9. feared: caused to be afraid, terrified.

10. best-regarded: held in highest regard.

12. thoughts: affections.

14. nice direction. That is, by the fastidious, exacting judgment of a maiden's eyes.

17. scanted: restricted.

18. wit. Not "sense of humor," or "jest," but in its original sense of "wisdom," "judgment," "sagacity." In such expressions as "to be at the end of *one's wits*," and "to lose *one's wits*," we still retain the older meaning.

20. stood as fair: would have stood, or been, as favorable a suitor. Portia probably refers to the Moor's complexion when she says "fair."

25. Sophy: the Emperor, or Shah, of Persia.

26. Sultan Solyman. This was undoubtedly the tenth Ottoman Sultan, called the "Magnificent," who reigned from 1520 to 1566.

31. alas the while! alas!

32. Hercules and Lichas. Hercules, the giant and heroic warrior, as a type of strength, is contrasted with Lichas, his servant and page.

33. which is the better man: to decide which is the better man.

35. Alcides: Hercules, so called from the fact that his grandfather was **Alcæus**.

42. advised: deliberate, prudent, cautious.

43. Nor will not. The double negative, common enough in Shakespeare, here seems to give emphasis to Morocco's refusal to be deliberate.

44. temple. The church, where oaths to observe the conditions were to be taken.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is there impressive about the meeting of the Moor's train and Portia's attendants?
2. Describe the Prince of Morocco as he appears to your imagination.
3. What seem to be the most striking qualities of his character?
4. Do you like him? Why? Why not?
5. What is there rather doubtful about Portia's compliment in lines 20–22?
6. Why do you think Portia postpones Morocco's choice until after dinner?
7. Are there any dramatic reasons for separating the arrival and reception of Morocco from his choice of the caskets? Why are these two scenes generally acted together in a modern presentation of the play?

8. Is there anything about the Prince of Morocco that leads you to think he may choose one casket more than the others? What is it?

9. What great tragedy by Shakespeare has a Moor for its chief character?

10. Remember that in 1600, when the Merchant of Venice was first printed, Moorish warriors were still threatening southern Europe. What do you know about their power in Africa and Spain? If you are interested in this subject look up the "Song of Roland," and read in Irving's "Alhambra" these stories: "The Journey," "Palace of the Alhambra," "The Hall of the Ambassadors," "Alhamar," "The Court of Lions."

ACT II

Scene 2

Although it is barely possible that this scene takes place on the afternoon of the first day of the play, it seems more natural to suppose that several days have elapsed since Antonio signed the bond. Since then Bassanio has hired a ship, and is now busy buying presents and hiring a retinue of followers to accompany him to Belmont.

We now meet Launcelot, the clown of the play. Do not try to find a meaning in everything he says, as some of the German critics have done. Remember that he is a country lad, whose ignorance, conceit, and love of "talking big" produce naturally many strange blunders and meaningless expressions.

1. **Certainly my conscience,** etc.: "Surely my conscience will yield and let me run away." Spoken doubtfully, coaxingly.

9. **Via!** Away! Formerly used in England with horses, like our "Go long!" "Get up!"

10. **for the heavens!** By heavens! The wit of the expression lies in the absurdity of the Devil's swearing by the *heavens*

15. **did something smack:** had some taste of the rascal about him. **grow to.** This has been explained by Clarendon as a

"household phrase applied to milk when burnt to the bottom of the saucepan, and thence acquiring an unpleasant taste."

21. God bless the mark. An obscure expression. It probably has the force of an apology for saying that the Jew is "a kind of devil." Compare "saving your reverence" just below, which virtually means, "If I may say so without offence to any one."

24. incarnal. Other texts have "incarnation." Launcelot is trying to use the word **incarnate**: embodied in flesh.

33. sand-blind: partially blind, dim of sight. Launcelot exaggerates the word to "high-gravel blind." (Compare "pur-blind," "stone-blind.")

34. confusions. Launcelot's blunder for "conclusions."

38. marry. A corrupted form of "Mary," or "By Mary" (the Virgin).

41. God's sonties: God's saints, or sanctities.

44. Master Launcelot. "Master" was a title given only to gentlemen. Launcelot's fun consists in trying to make his old half-blind father give him this title. He succeeds in line 55. How will you, then, read lines 44 and 46?

45. raise the waters. Like our "raise a racket," "raise a row," "raise a wind."

49. well to live: well-off, in good condition.

50. a' will: he will.

53. ergo: therefore. Of course Launcelot refers to his father's last words. He reasons apparently thus: "Therefore, old man, since you address me with the words 'your worship,' and since I am Launcelot's friend, shouldn't you speak of him as *Master* Launcelot?"

55. an't: if it.

56. Ergo, etc. Therefore I am *Master* Launcelot. When Old Gobbo said "an't please your *mastership*," his son had at last won his point, for his father had addressed him by the title of "master."

57. father. "A common and familiar title for old men." Does Launcelot use the word in the same way in line 64?

58. Sisters Three. The three Fates (Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos) who were supposed to control human destinies.

63. hovel-post: a post supporting an out-building or shed.

65. Alack the day: alas. (Compare "lackaday," "lackadaisy.")

87. Lord worshipped might he be! The Lord be praised! Good Heavens! **What a beard,** etc. While speaking, Launcelot knelt with his back to his father to receive his blessing. What amusing blunder does the old man now make?

89. fill-horse: shaft-horse, thill-horse.

91. of: on. Shakespeare's prepositions often differ from those of modern English. Make note of others as you read the play. See, for instance, line 71 above.

96–97. I have set up my rest: I have made up my mind. In games of chance, especially in a game called "primers," the *rest* was the highest stake one could venture. Notice Launcelot's pun on the word in the line following.

101. give me your present. "Me" here is the so-called "ethical dative" commonly found in the English of Shakespeare's time. Often such a dative adds nothing to the sense of the expression. In this passage it may give the force of "for me," or "to please me," to Launcelot's request. In "King John" Hubert says to an executioner, "Heat me these irons hot," where *me* has the same force.

106. hasted: hastened.

109. anon: at once.

112. Gramercy! Great thanks! A corruption of the French words "grand merci." **wouldst thou aught with me?** Do you want me for anything? Can I do anything for you?

117. to serve,—. The dash, of course, indicates a sudden interruption. Dr. Furness says of these lines: "Is it stage tradition here which makes Launcelot not only interrupt his father, but turn him swiftly round, and after the delivery of his speech to Bassanio turn him as swiftly back again, and keep up these gyrations until the amazed Bassanio says, 'One speak for both'?"

121. cater-cousins. Though the meaning of *cater* is obscure,

it is evident Gobbo means that Shylock and Launcelot do not get along well together.

124. frutify. Of course there is no such word. Launcelot evidently means "notify," and, as Dr. Furness has pointed out, is possibly "harking back to his 'specify' of line 119, which is taken as 'spicify,' — spice and fruit."

127. impertinent. Another Gobboism. So also "defect" in line 133.

136. preferred: promoted.

139. The old proverb, etc. The proverb referred to is, "The grace of God is better than riches." **parted:** divided.

145. guarded: ornamented, trimmed. In "Henry VIII" a fool is thus described:

"A fellow
In long motley coat **guarded** with yellow."

148. table: palm of the hand.

149. Go to. See note on I, 3, 104.

149–150. a simple line of life. Launcelot is pretending to read his own fortune by examining the lines of his hand. In palmistry the *line of life* is the line which circles the ball or base of the thumb. "Simple," of course, is spoken in sarcasm.

152. coming-in: lot, fortune.

155. a good wench for this gear: a good woman for this business. (Compare "gear" in I, 1, 110.)

158. think on this. During Launcelot's chatter, Bassanio has been evidently talking to his followers at the rear of the stage.

159. bestowed: arranged, disposed of.

161. best-esteemed acquaintance: best-loved friends.

166. a suit to you: a favor to ask of you.

169. hear thee. In this expression, as in *fare thee well*, the "thee" seems to be used for "thou," and not reflexively.

171. Parts: qualities, characteristics.

174. liberal. This word is well explained by the adjectives of line 171 above.

177. miscónstrued. Spelled *miscónstered* in the First Folio edition, as the word was then pronounced.

179. a sober habit: a quiet demeanor or bearing.

182. hood mine eyes. In Shakespeare's time men wore their hats at meals, — a custom which probably came down from the days of chivalry. Of what significance is the word "thus" in the next line?

185. studied in a sad ostent, etc. That is, trained to put on a solemn appearance and behavior such as would please his grandmother.

188. gauge: estimate, judge.

192. purpose: intend, plan.

194. I must to Lorenzo. The verb "go" is omitted, an ellipsis which is common in Shakespeare. (Compare Launcelot's "To him, father," in line 110.)

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you act the part of Launcelot while he is carrying on the debate between his conscience and the fiend?

2. What is the effect of this direct conversation? Do you like it?

3. Is Launcelot a jester, or clown, by profession, like Touchstone in "As You Like It" and Wamba in "Ivanhoe"?

4. Explain clearly just how Launcelot is amusing to you. Is his wit intentional or unintentional? Natural or forced?

5. What does Lorenzo mean later by calling him a "wit-snapper"?

6. Why does Launcelot's "trying confusions" with his old blind father not seem unkind or disrespectful?

7. What characteristic of Launcelot appears in his ludicrous attempt to make his father address him as "Master"? Point out other places in this scene that show the same quality of character.

8. How would you arrange the acting of lines 85–89? Of 96–98?

9. What is the stage "business" in lines 110–132? What makes this part of the scene very amusing when it is well acted? (See page 217, note on line 117.)

10. Why do you think Shakespeare has Gratiano accompany Bassanio? How does he make it seem natural that he should go to Belmont, too?

11. In what way are Gratiano's words here in perfect keeping with the character of the man we met in the first scene of the play?

12. Can you suggest any reasons for Bassanio's really wanting his talkative friend to go to Belmont with him?

13. What important hints are dropped in the last few lines of the scene?

14. Where before have you noticed Shakespeare's skill in "pointing forward to coming events" by suggestions just at the close of a scene?

15. With what do these suggestive scene-endings compare in fiction?

16. How has the plot been advanced by this scene?

17. What parts of it have not contributed anything to speak of to the main action? Have they, in your judgment, an important purpose? Would you omit them if you put the play on the stage now?

18. What are Launcelot's chief characteristics? Why are you glad he has been added to the persons of the drama?

19. Make a list of Launcelot's blunders.

20. What is a "Gobboism"? A "Malapropism"? Look up Mrs. Malaprop, and compare these words with "Johnsonese." Can you think of other words made from the names of writers or characters in books?

21. Notice the point at which the characters begin to talk in verse form. Why not have this form from the beginning of the scene? Compare this with a similar change in I, 3.

ACT II

Scene 3

Scene III. The same. That is, still in Venice. Notice the scene-headings that follow.

10. exhibit. Again Launcelot blunders. He probably is trying to use "prohibit" or "inhibit" = check, restrain. Some think that he uses "exhibit" correctly and means, "Tears must show what my tongue would say if I could only speak." It is, however, as we have seen, very easy for Launcelot to use the wrong word, and there is a bit of amusement for the audience in the thought of "tears exhibiting the tongue."

11. pagan: one who is not a Christian; a heathen. Launcelot's character as wit and clown allows him a degree of familiarity and outspokenness not permitted to servants in general.

12. something: somewhat.

14. heinous (hay'nus): wicked, atrocious.

17. manners. Not merely the outward forms of behavior. The word here is almost synonymous with "character."

18. this strife. Jessica is having an "inward conflict" between her duty to her father and her love for Lorenzo.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What piece of the plot is here presented?
2. Why is this scene almost always omitted in modern presentations of "The Merchant"?
3. In what ways do you imagine Shylock makes an unhappy home for his daughter?
4. Why does Jessica speak in verse, Launcelot in prose? (See II, 2, 1–105.)
5. When do you think this scene takes place in relation to the one that has just passed?
6. As we shall have to consider the character of Jessica more fully later, note here what moral qualities her few words suggest.

ACT II

Scene 4

1. in supper-time: during supper.

5. spoke us yet, etc. We have not yet bespoken, or engaged, torchbearers for ourselves.

6. vile: poor, not best, unseemly. In line 29 of the next scene we have "vile" in its stronger and more common meaning. **quaintly**: skilfully, artfully.

7. undertook: Shakespeare also uses the form "undertaken," just as he has both "spoke" and "spoken," "mistook" and "mistaken," "wrote" and "writ." (See lines 13–14 below.) He wrote at a time when the language was passing through many changes and abounded in varying forms.

10. an: if (as in II, 2, 55). **break up this.** This is not a "Gobboism," but a usual way of saying, "break open."

13–14. writ. See note on "undertook" above.

15. By your leave, sir. Launcelot begs Lorenzo's pardon for going.

22. masque. "A form of amusement which consisted in a number of persons, wearing visors and suitably disguised, going in procession to a house where festivities were on foot, and there acting a short play, or leading an elaborate dance." (H. C. Withers.)

23. provided of: provided with.

24. straight: at once, straightway (as in I, 3, 163).

32. page's suit. The page, or boy attendant of a gentleman, always wore an elaborate livery.

You remember Bassanio, in Scene 2, told one of his servants to give Launcelot "a livery more guarded (trimmed) than his fellows."

36. Unless she do it, etc. The "she" refers to misfortune which is personified, like Fortune in Scene 2. Lorenzo says that misfortune will never come to Jessica, except with the excuse that her father is a Jew.

37. faithless: without faith, unbelieving, infidel. ["Then Jesus answered and said, *O faithless* and perverse generation!" (Matt. xvii. 17.)]

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the purpose of this scene? Is it an important one?
2. Tell the story of Lorenzo's plan to carry off Jessica.
3. What was a masque? Why was it a suitable means of effecting the elopement?
4. What opinion are you forming of Jessica?
5. What difficulty would these numerous short scenes present to the stage-manager to-day?
6. How were these arranged in the theatre of Shakespeare's time? (See page 184.)

ACT II

Scene 5

This scene, with the others here concerning the elopement of Jessica, takes place in the afternoon and evening before Bassanio sets sail for Belmont, which was apparently about nine o'clock at night.

2. of: between. — Why not make a list of the different meanings of this preposition throughout the play?

3. What. A common exclamation of impatience when calling to persons. In "Julius Caesar" Brutus calls to his servant, "What, Lucius, ho!" when trying to wake him. **gormandize.** The word is well explained in line 46, where Shylock calls Launcelot "a huge feeder."

5. rend apparel out: wear out clothes.

8. Your worship was wont to tell me, etc. "You have always told me that I was unable to do anything without orders, so I thought I would show you I could for once."

11. bid forth: invited out. For a similar use of "forth," remember Bassanio's "find the other *forth*," in I, 1, 143, and see line 36 below.

15. prodigal. See note on I, 1, 129.

16. right loath: reluctant, extremely averse.

17. some ill a-brewing, etc. Some trouble is being contrived that disturbs my peace of mind. Thus we say, "A plot is *brewing*."

18. to-night: last night. Usually Shakespeare uses "to-night" in its modern meaning.

It was a popular superstition that to dream of money was a sign of bad fortune.

20. reproach. Launcelot's blunder for "approach." Shylock's reply in the next line is a grimly humorous play upon the words.

24. my nose fell a-bleeding on Black Monday. Black Monday was the Monday after Easter, so called from Easter-Monday of 1360, "which day was full of dark mist and hail, and so bitter cold that many men died on their horses' backs with the cold." A nose-bleed is still considered, among superstitious people, an omen that something unusual is going to happen.

29. vile. See note on "vile" in II, 4, 6. **wry-necked:** with neck twisted or contorted. Though this word may apply to the crooked neck of an ancient fife, it seems more probable that Shylock is here describing the player, or fifer, who twisted his neck to one side as he blew on his instrument.

32. varnished faces. The faces of "the Christian fools" would be either actually painted or disguised by masks.

34. shallow foppery: silly foolishness.

35. By Jacob's staff. In Genesis xxxii, 10, Jacob says, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan," and the staff of Jacob is mentioned again in the New Testament. Is the oath an appropriate one to put in Shylock's mouth? Why?

36. of feasting forth: for feasting out. (See note on I, 1, 15 and on I, 1, 143. Also line 11 above.)

37. sirrah. Compare I, 2, 125, and see note.

42. worth a Jewess' eye: worth the notice of a Jewess. Launcelot is punning on an old saying, "worth a Jew's eye," which became proverbial from the fact that Jews were often threatened with the loss of an eye to extort money from them.

43. Hagar's offspring. In Genesis xvi occurs the story of Hagar, the bondwoman of Sarah, who left her mistress with the grievance that she had been treated harshly. Shylock's allusion is thus very appropriate, for Launcelot is leaving him under similar circumstances.

45. patch: a fool or clown, probably from the motley (patched) garb of the professional jester. The word came to be an expression of contempt. We have it still in "cross-patch."

46. in profit. That is, in those services and duties which would be profitable to Shylock.

55–56. crost — lost. Here we have again the rhyming couplet at the close of a scene, as in I, 1, I, 2, and frequently throughout Shakespeare's plays. Here "the rhyme not only marks the two exits, but also the proverbial or epigrammatic sayings with which father and daughter take leave for the last time." — H. L. WITHERS.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the setting and stage "business" of the opening lines as you imagine them.

2. What characteristics of Launcelot are brought out by Shylock here? Do they agree with the impressions you have formed of him in earlier scenes?

3. What seems important to you in the lines, —

> "There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
> For I did dream of money-bags to-night"?

4. Can you compare Shylock's uneasiness with Antonio's sadness at the opening of the play? Really, do "coming events cast their shadow before"?

5. What seems to imply that Shylock feels confident of getting Antonio into his power by means of the bond?

6. What does this confidence suggest as to Shylock's knowledge of Antonio's ships?

7. With what remark that he made in the first act is Shylock now acting inconsistently when he goes to dine with the Christian merchants?

8. Why do you think he goes to Bassanio's house in spite of his fears and forebodings?

9. Can you find any defence for Jessica's direct lie to her father? (Line 44.)

10. Why did the Elizabethan audience probably laugh at this lie? Does the situation seem amusing to us to-day?

11. Do you have any sympathy for Jessica? Explain and defend your answer.

12. What are your feelings for Shylock in this scene? Do you think the poet wished us to have any pity for him?

13. How are we in the audience taken into the confidence, as it were, of the plotters against Shylock? Does this increase or lessen our interest in the scene?

14. Notice again the variations of verse and prose forms. How do they agree with variations in previous scenes?

ACT II

Scene 6

1. **pent-house.** A shed, or any small building, with a single sloping roof.

2. **to make stand:** to wait for him.

5. **Venus' pigeons.** In Greek and Roman mythology the chariot of Venus, the goddess of love, was drawn through the air by doves.

7. **obligéd:** plighted, "bound by contract."

9. **sits down.** We must supply the "with." Prepositions which have already been expressed before the relative are often omitted by Shakespeare. Thus in line 12 below "face them" (with).

10. untread again: retrace, go over again.

14. younker: youngster, gallant young fellow.

15. scarféd: adorned with flags and streamers.

17. How like the prodigal, etc. Here the reference to the story of the Prodigal Son is more definite than in line 14.

18. over-weathered: weather-beaten, changed in color.

21. abode: stay, absence.

Enter JESSICA, *above*, — that is, on the balcony at the rear of the stage. (See p. 181.)

27. Albeit: although.

30. who love I, etc. "Who," as an accusative form for "whom" in interrogative sentences, is as common in Shakespeare's plays as it is to-day.

33. casket: as elsewhere in the play, a small chest or box for jewelry. The use of this word for a "coffin" is local to the United States.

35. my exchange: my change of apparel.

42. too light. Jessica plays on two meanings of *light*, — "brilliant," "bright," and "undignified," "frivolous."

43. an office of discovery. The duty of a torch-bearer was to make the way clear. Jessica thinks she ought to be kept out of sight, — "obscured," not "discovered."

45. garnish: decoration, array.

47. close. "The secret, concealing night is going fast."

51. by my hood. Gratiano, who, you have noticed, is fond of oaths, here swears by the hood of the cloak which he wears as part of his masking clothes. Others have explained the *hood* as meaning "myself," that is, "my estate," — the word we have in "manhood," "childhood," "knighthood," etc. Which do you prefer? **Gentile.** Probably a play upon "gentle" and "Gentile" is intended.

52. Beshrew me. A mild oath, often used playfully and with none of the original meaning of "curse." Thus in III, 2, 14, Portia says to Bassanio, "Beshrew your eyes."

64. is come about: has turned.

65. presently: immediately, at once.

67. glad on't? There are old people in New England who still use this contraction of "on it," where we should expect "of it," as "plenty on't," "Have you any on't?" "There's more on't," etc. It is a curious fact that many words and expressions of Shakespeare's time are in common usage in various parts of America, though they have ceased to exist in the twentieth-century Englishman's vocabulary. Have you an explanation to offer? Remember that Shakespeare died in 1616. Jamestown was settled in 1607 and Plymouth in 1620.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of any reasons why Shakespeare delayed the arrival of Lorenzo?

2. In what way does Gratiano's speech, beginning "That ever holds" (line 8), seem in perfect keeping with his character?

3. With what passage at the beginning of the play may these lines be well compared?

4. Do you consider Jessica a thief? What will you say of her taking her father's jewels and ducats?

5. Comment on the relations that seem to have existed between father and daughter as shown by the ease of Jessica's access to Shylock's treasure.

6. What is there in this scene that would have pleased Shakespeare's audiences?

7. What is Antonio's errand? How does he say "Fie, fie, Gratiano!"? Is he reproving Gratiano for anything more than delaying Bassanio's departure?

8. What is the purpose of the last eight lines? Why do you think a modern production of the play closes the scene with the departure of Lorenzo, Jessica, and their friends?

9. Sir Henry Irving, when playing the part of Shylock, inserted an addition at the close of this scene that Shakespeare never intended. After the excited and happy lovers had fled, for a minute the stage was empty and hushed. Then we saw the old

father returning alone to his house. Again and again he knocked, but only echoes answered him. Every look and every movement showed his surprise and anxiety growing into fear and terror; and then as the curtain fell he sank in an agony of despair by the door of his empty home.

Why do you think Irving inserted this return of Shylock? Do you think that it might make an effective ending? Did he improve upon Shakespeare's story of the elopement? What influence upon our feelings for Jessica and her father would this addition by Irving have? Why?

ACT II

Scene 7

Although it is impossible and unnecessary to fix exactly the time of each scene, the events from II, 2 to II, 7 seem to fall on the same day. Thus the Prince of Morocco makes his choice of the caskets on the very evening that Bassanio sailed for Belmont.

Flourish of cornets. Notice that a few notes, or a *flourish*, on cornets announced the coming of the various suitors, thus giving these particular scenes an air of ceremony and pomp.

1. discover: disclose, reveal.

4. who. "Who" for "which" and "which" for "who" were common enough in Shakespeare's English. Compare "Our Father, *which* art in Heaven," and notice that two lines below "which" is used to refer to the silver casket.

9. hazard: venture, risk.

12. withal: at the same time, with it.

20. golden: excellent, good, pure, — as in "Macbeth": "I have bought *golden* opinions from all sorts of people." **dross:** anything worthless or impure.

25. even: calm, steady, — as in the expression "an even disposition." What picture does this line make in your mind?

30. disabling: belittling, disparaging. "I would be foolishly disparaging myself," says Morocco, "to doubt my own merits."

33. In graces, etc. That is, my education, training, and character.

40. mortal-breathing: living, — in contrast to figures of saints on shrines that are cut out of stone.

41. Hyrcanian deserts. These were tracts of desert south of the Caspian Sea in Asia Minor. **vasty:** desolate, barren, waste.

42. throughfares. "Through" and "thorough" are the same word. Do you see why the poet used the shorter form here? Try reading both in the line.

44–45. The watery kingdom, etc. The comparison of spray from ocean waves and a person spitting into the air is, to say the least, strained and unpleasant. Shakespeare is not often guilty of such conceits, and even here it is possibly done on purpose to suit the character and "big talk" of Morocco.

49. like: likely, probable.

50–51. It were too gross, etc. Lead would be too coarse to enclose her shroud. ["Cerecloth" is an interesting word to study in a large dictionary.]

52. immured: buried, confined.

53. ten times undervalued, etc. Silver, as Morocco says, was in Shakespeare's time rated at about $\frac{1}{10}$ the value of pure ("tried") gold. To-day it is only about $\frac{1}{16}$ as valuable.

56. A coin, etc. The gold *angel* of Shakespeare's day, which was worth about ten shillings ($2.50), had on one side a figure of Michael slaying the dragon.

57. insculped upon: engraved on the surface, — in contrast to Portia's picture which lies within.

60. thrive I as I may: may good fortune be mine!

63. A carrion Death: a skull.

77. part: depart. "The curfew tolls the knell of *parting* day."

78. A gentle riddance. Compare our familiar saying, "Good riddance to bad rubbish."

79. complexion: hue, color.

Notice again the rhyme tag, *go . . . so*, at the end of a scene.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Consider again Shakespeare's reasons for separating this scene from the one in which the Prince of Morocco first appears at Belmont.

2. Is Morocco's boasting and general style of talking in keeping with the man as we saw him in the first scene of this act? Point out similarities in these two scenes.

3. One writer says of the Prince: "The Moor's good opinion of himself is so honestly and so heartily expressed that it is little more than healthy military 'swagger' put into words." Do you agree? Give your reasons for liking or disliking this suitor?

4. What feelings for the Moor do you think Portia has? Does she show them in any way?

5. If you were acting the part of Portia, what would you do during the Prince's soliloquy, lines 13–58? How would you act when he asks for the golden key?

6. Put into your own words Morocco's reasoning that leads him to choose the gold casket. Do you find anything to sympathize with in his argument?

7. Does the manner in which the Prince takes his loss cause him to rise or fall in your estimation?

8. Sum up and explain the meaning of the scroll. What lines of it, if any, have you heard before?

9. Point out several ways in which this scroll differs from anything you have so far found in the play. Can you give any reasons for these differences?

10. Do you have any suspicion yet as to which casket contains Portia's picture? Defend your opinion.

ACT II

Scene 8

This scene apparently takes place the morning after the evening on which Bassanio sailed for Belmont, Jessica eloped with Lorenzo, and Morocco chose the golden casket.

9. amorous: loving, affectionate.

10. certified: assured.

14. the dog Jew. Remember Shylock's words in Act I: "You call me misbeliever, cut-throat *dog*."

16. Fled with a Christian! From the earliest times Jewish laws have forbidden and condemned "mixed marriages." Shakespeare's audience found the wild passion of Shylock for his lost money, and the pitiful grief for his lost daughter, equally amusing.

25. keep his day. That is, pay the money he owes Shylock on the day it is due.

27. reasoned: talked, conversed.

28. the narrow seas: the English Channel, — as often in older writers.

29. miscarried: was lost, went astray.

30. fraught: freighted, loaded. We use the word to-day figuratively in such expressions as, "fraught with mischief," "fraught with grief."

39. slubber: to do a thing carelessly or poorly; to slur over.

40. stay the very riping of the time: remain until the "time is ripe."

42. your mind of love. That is, your loving mind; your mind full of thoughts of love.

44. ostents: displays.

45. conveniently: suitably.

48. wondrous sensible: wonderfully sensitive.

52. quicken his embracéd heaviness. That is, — enliven, or cheer, the "grief which he hugs." In the next act Bassanio speaks of "rash-embraced despair."

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is meant by calling this an "informational scene"? Is it especially dramatic?

2. What purpose does it fulfil? Why do you think it is generally omitted when the play is given to-day?

3. Do you think Antonio had any knowledge of the elopement?

4. Why do you think that Shakespeare had Salanio *report* the words and actions of Shylock and the boys of Venice, rather than put them on the stage before us?

5. In what way is Jessica now practically dead to her father?

6. What is the effect of Shylock's grieving and raging, in one and the same breath, over his lost daughter and his stolen ducats?

7. Do you feel that Salanio is giving a faithful or an exaggerated account of Shylock's actions and words? Defend your opinion.

8. What effect upon the metre of lines 15–22 does Shylock's passion seem to have? (Read the lines aloud and compare them with those that precede and follow.)

9. Why does the dramatist just at this point have Salanio mention Antonio's possible losses?

10. What effect may Jessica's flight with Lorenzo have upon Antonio? Explain fully.

11. How do you account for Antonio's apparent grief at Bassanio's departure?

12. What is the dramatic effect of the merchant's sorrow and loneliness coming here just after Salanio's account of Shylock's passionate rage?

13. In what other ways is this scene a series of contrasts?

14. How is it that Antonio's kindness seems to make Shylock's passion more cruel, whereas the Jew's confused rage seems to make the merchant's goodness more gentle and kind?

The man who probably more than any other had a direct influence upon Shakespeare's earlier works was Christopher Marlowe.

Now when "The Merchant" was being written, Marlowe's tragedy, "The Jew of Malta," first acted in 1589, was still popular. In the second act of this play, Barabas, a rich Jew and miser, comes secretly at night to his house, which has been taken from him by his Christian enemies and turned into a nunnery. To get possession of the gold hidden in his home he has had his only daughter, Abigail, enter the institution as a nun. On reaching his door he waits under the balcony and calls:

Bara. Who's there?
Abig. Who's that?
Bara. Peace, Abigail! 'tis I.
Abig. Then, father, here receive thy happiness.
Bara. Hast thou 't?
Abig. Here. [*Throws down bags.*] Hast thou 't? There's more, and more, and more.
Bara. O my girl,
My gold, my fortune, my felicity,
Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy;
Welcome the first beginner of my bliss!
O Abigail, Abigail, that I had thee here too!
Then my desires were fully satisfied:
But I will practice thy enlargement thence:
O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!
[*Hugs the bags.*]

15. Compare in detail the words of Barabas with those of Shylock as reported by Salanio.

16. Could the similarity of these passages, in your opinion, be one of mere chance? How will you account for it?

17. Point out the different circumstances surrounding the speeches of the two Jews.

18. What scene in "The Merchant" is recalled to your mind by Abigail's throwing bags of gold from a balcony to her father? Compare and contrast the two scenes.

19. Do you think Marlowe's lines here are stronger and finer than Shakespeare's or *vice versa?* Why?

20. Why do you suppose "The Jew of Malta" has been forgotten and is never acted, whereas "The Merchant of Venice" has lived, not only in the classroom, but on the stage?

(You will find a further study of Marlowe's influence upon Shakespeare a most interesting subject for a paper or a talk. See "Shakespeare's Predecessors," J. A. Symonds; "Shakespeare and His Predecessors," F. S. Boas; "Marlowe's Influence on Shakespeare," Verity; and page 102 of this volume.)

ACT II

Scene 9

1. straight: straightway, at once.

3. his election presently. He comes to make his choice immediately.

Flourish of cornets. See note on II, 7, opening lines.

6. nuptial rites: marriage ceremony.

19. And so have I addressed me. By taking the necessary oaths Arragon has prepared himself for the choice. **Fortune now**, etc. May good fortune, or success, now come to the hopes of my heart!

25–26. meant By the fool multitude: meant to apply to the multitude, or masses.

27. fond: foolish, as in III, 3, 9, *q. v.* The usual meaning of the word in Shakespeare.

28. martlet: the European house-martin, a bird closely resembling the American martins and swallows. In "Macbeth" Shakespeare speaks of the "temple-haunting martlet" that makes its "pendent bed" in every nook of the castle walls.

29. in the weather: exposed to storms.

30. in the force and road of casualty. In the power and way of every accident or misfortune.

32. jump with: agree with, fall in with. So in the proverb, "Great minds jump together," and often in Shakespeare.

33. barbarous: uneducated, uncultivated.

34. Why, then to thee. What words will you supply here?

38. cozen: cheat, deceive.

41. estates: dignities, titles of rank. **degrees:** differing grades of honor.

42. clear: pure, unstained.

44. should cover, etc. How many then would keep their hats on, as masters, who now, as servants or as inferiors, remove them.

46–48. "How much meanness would be found among the great, and how much greatness among the mean." (Johnson.) **gleaned:** gathered. **ruin:** refuse.

49. varnished. Although this word is used perhaps in reference to the "ruin of the times," rather than to the "chaff," the passage is often quoted as an illustration of Shakespeare's frequent confusion and mixture of metaphors.

51. I will assume desert. I claim to be, or take it upon myself to be, one who deserves.

55. schedule: a written document.

61–62. Portia probably has in mind here an old saying, that an "offender cannot be the judge of his own case." The significance of her reply, however, is somewhat obscure.

63. tried. To *try*, of metal, is to reduce to a pure state by melting.

68. I wis: I think, I suppose.

70. I. That is, the "blinking idiot" who is speaking to Arragon in the "schedule."

71. you are sped: your destiny is settled; your case is decided.

77. wroth: suffering, pain, — rather than anger. This earlier meaning of the words "wroth" and "wrath" appears in our use to-day of "writhe."

80. They have the wisdom, etc. Their shrewdness and attempt to be especially wise is their undoing.

81. The ancient saying, etc. The old proverb is really true.

84. what would my lord? Spoken, of course, in jest to the servant who has just pompously uttered the words, "Where is my lady?"

88. sensible regreets: greetings that may be felt or touched, such as presents.

89. to wit: namely. **commends**: greetings. Compare "Richard II," III, 1, 38: "I send to her my kind *commends*."

91. likely: pleasing, promising.

94. fore-spurrer. The messenger has spurred his horse on to arrive before his lord.

97. high-day wit: holiday, or especially fine, language. "Our Fourth of July is a *high-day*; and we all know what Fourth-of-July eloquence is." (Hudson.)

99. Quick Cupid's post. The postman of the god of love would be a fast traveller. In V, 1, 46, Launcelot says, "There's a *post* come from my master." **mannerly**: politely, graciously.

100. "May it be Bassanio, O Cupid!"

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Just what oaths were the suitors obliged to take before choosing?

2. Why do you think Portia's father required them to agree to these conditions?

3. Compare Arragon's reasoning with that of the Prince of Morocco. Why have both avoided the leaden casket?

4. Do you think Portia's father feared that such men as Arragon would sue for his daughter's hand? How did he plan to send them away losers?

5. Contrast the characters of Morocco and Arragon. Which do you like the better? Why?

6. Compare the different ways in which these two men take their defeat. Which is the "better loser"?

7. Compare the meter and construction of this scroll with the one in the gold casket.

8. How are the six lines that follow the scroll related to it? How do they differ from the rest of the scene?

9. Compare the ending of this scene with I, 2.

10. What characteristic of Portia is shown in her reply to the

servant, "Here: what would my lord?" Point out other signs of this playful mood in I, 2.

11. Why do you think the poet has the servant spend such "high-day wit" in praising Bassanio's messenger?

12. Contrast this with the announcement of Morocco's approach at the close of I, 2. Contrast also Portia's words on both occasions.

13. In Mr. Beerbohm Tree's production of "The Merchant of Venice," Miss Elsie Ferguson, taking the part of Portia, speaks the last line of the scene: "Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!" Can you give any reasons for this change? Which way seems the better to you?

14. When do you think this scene takes place in relation to Morocco's choice and Bassanio's departure from Venice?

ACT III

Scene 1

Evidently a long time has elapsed since the end of Act II. In his search for Jessica, Tubal has been as far as Genoa; and from Shylock's words to the gaoler, "fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before," it would seem that in two weeks the bond will fall due. Yet at the opening of the next scene Bassanio seems only to have just arrived at Belmont. For a further discussion of the time-duration of the play, see p. 106.

2. it lives there unchecked. The report prevails on the Rialto uncontradicted.

3. the narrow seas: the English Channel.

4. the Goodwins. The Goodwin sands are dangerous shoals off the eastern coast of Kent.

6. my gossip Report. "Report is figured as a talkative old woman, fond of ginger, and full of pretended emotions." (Withers.)

9. knapped ginger. To *knap* meant to snap, break in pieces, and also to bite or nibble. Either meaning will suit the context here.

11. slips of prolixity, etc. Without any rambling or beating about the bush. Compare "a slip of the tongue," and Hamlet's description of conversation as "the beaten way of friendship."

15. Come, the full stop: Come, finish your sentence.

19. betimes: soon, at once.

19–20. lest the devil cross my prayer, etc. Salanio declares that he must say "Amen," or "so be it," to confirm his friend's good wishes before the devil comes between them and destroys the effect of his prayer.

26. the wings she flew withal. That is, the clothes she wore when eloping with Lorenzo.

28. complexion: nature, disposition.

30. She is damned for it. It is impossible for us to believe that an enraged and grief-stricken father would in reality answer the cruel taunts of his enemies with a pun. But "We must not forget," as Dr. Furness says, "how dearly Shakespeare loved a pun, and how, at times, its attractions are irresistible to him." To quibble with words was a fashion among the poets of his day which even the great dramatist could not escape. So we shall not be surprised to find Antonio punning on the word "heart" in his farewell speech to his friend. (IV, 1, 281.)

33. carrion. Here used for a disgusting or loathsome person.

36. jet. A kind of coal. Compare "jet-black."

37. rhenish. Rhenish wines, named from the river Rhine, are often spoken of as "white wines" in contrast to those that are a darker red.

40. match: bargain.

42. smug: brisk, gay. **mart:** market.

50. hindered me half a million. Antonio has prevented Shylock from making half a million ducats.

62. humility: kindness, humanity.

63. sufferance: patience. In I, 3, Shylock said, "*Sufferance* is the badge of all our tribe."

65. and it shall go hard, etc. I will make every effort to surpass you in what you teach me.

71. matched: found to match them.

77. the curse. Shylock may possibly be thinking of the curse denounced against Israel in Deut. xxviii. 15–68, one part of which reads: "Thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long."

79. in that. "Diamond," or "loss," is understood.

92. argosy. Compare I, 1, 9, and note.

103. divers: various ones.

104. break: fail, become bankrupt. (Look up the origin of the word "bankrupt" to find its interesting connection with *break*.)

110. my turquoise. The turquoise, which was the stone for a lover's ring, was believed to have magical properties, such as warning its owner of approaching danger, changing its color if the wearer were ill, and reconciling man and wife. It is clear that Shylock values his turquoise ring not for the ducats it is worth, but for its associations with Leah, who died, we may imagine, when Jessica was a little girl.

115. fee me an officer. Engage an officer for me and bind him by paying him a fee. **bespeak:** engage.

118. synagogue. A building for Jewish worship and religious instruction. "Shakespeare probably intended to add another shade of darkness to the character of Shylock by making him formally devout while meditating his horrible vengeance." (Clarendon.) Do you agree with this explanation of Shylock's appointing the synagogue as a meeting-place?

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. With what earlier scene may the conversation between Salanio and Salarino be compared? In what respects are these places alike?

2. What do you think of the attitude of the merchants toward Shylock? Can you prove from a passage in Act I that Antonio would probably have used similar language to the Jew?

3. In your opinion is the picture of Shylock in this scene drawn to arouse our pity or contempt?

4. Whatever the motive of the dramatist may have been, how do you feel personally after reading Shylock's speech beginning "To bait fish withal"?

5. What arguments do the merchants have to meet these remarkable sentences?

6. Do you feel that Shakespeare in this scene is almost "ahead of his time," — that he is really pleading Shylock's cause against the common treatment of Jews by Christians in his day? Discuss fully this point.

7. Would this scene, in your judgment, have been comedy or tragedy to an audience in 1596? How and why does it impress an audience differently to-day?

8. What is there especially dramatic in the report of Tubal to Shylock? How would you arrange the setting and action of this dialogue?

9. In what ways does Tubal seem almost to be trying his best to torture his friend throughout his report?

10. Would this torturing of Shylock be really natural, or is it for the amusement of the audience in the pit? Discuss.

11. How do you feel toward Jessica after hearing Tubal's report?

12. What is there very human and touching in Shylock's exclamation, "It was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor!"?

13. In what way do you feel that Jessica was already "dead" to her father?

14. What effect does his daughter's marriage to Lorenzo seem to have upon Shylock's attitude toward Antonio?

15. What will you say of Shylock's desire for revenge? Is this desire perfectly natural and "Christian"?

16. What would you do if you were Shylock under these very circumstances? (Explain and defend your feelings and actions.)

17. What do you think is meant by the statement that Shylock "considers himself the depository of the vengeance of his race and religion"? Does this seem to you to be Shakespeare's conception of Shylock?

18. Would the passage beginning, "To bait fish withal" have been more or less effective in verse form? Why?

19. What is the effect of the repeated short questions? What is there forceful in this style of argument?

20. Is there any marked climax in this passage? What do you think it is?

21. "Shakespeare in his prose is often as great as he is in his verse." Support this statement by pointing out the remarkable qualities of Shylock's long speech. Compare it with some of the finer passages in verse.

Here is perhaps the most famous prose in all the plays of Shakespeare:

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, — but wherefore I know not, — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

— *Hamlet*, II, 2, 304–323.

22. Do you see any similarity of emotion, style, and construction in these two selections? Why would they be less forceful, in your judgment, and less stirring, in regular blank verse?

ACT III

Scene 2

The time duration of this part of the play is puzzling. According to the simplest arrangement, two weeks have passed since the last scene, for we find a little later that the bond is forfeit and that Antonio is in danger of losing his life. This would mean that Bassanio had been at Belmont already nearly three months, since he apparently left Venice a day or two only after the bond was signed. Yet from the way the lovers speak, from the tone of the entire scene, and especially from Portia's words, "I would detain you here some month or two Before you venture for me," it is apparent that Bassanio has but just arrived, — perhaps only a few hours before the scene opens. This problem, which has given the critics a vast amount of bother, but which troubles us so little as we read the play, — and still less when we see it on the stage, — is discussed and explained on page 106.

3. forbear: refrain from (choosing).

6. Hate counsels, etc. Hatred would cause no such feelings.

9. some month or two. How naturally and charmingly Portia's "a day or two" has grown into "some month or two"!

11. I am then forsworn: I should be perjured (by breaking my oath to my father).

14. Beshrew. A mild curse or imprecation, generally used playfully. (Compare II, 6, 52.)

15. o'erlooked: bewitched. "To be *overlooked* is to receive a glance from some one who possesses the power of the evil eye, and is the cause of all kinds of mischief." (Jeffries, "Red Deer.")

18. naughty: wicked, bad. The word seems generally with Shakespeare to have a stronger meaning than it has to-day, as in the expressions "naughty gaoler" and "a naughty world," which occur later in the play.

20. Prove it so, etc. If this lottery of the caskets brings it to pass that I, who am really yours in love, cannot be yours at all, then Fortune, or Fate, should suffer the penalty, not I.

22. peize: retard, suspend.

23. eke: protract, lengthen.

24. election: choice.

25. the rack. An instrument of torture consisting of a frame with two crossbars, to which the victim was fastened to be stretched, sometimes even to the dislocation of joints. Torturing to extract confessions from suspected criminals was not uncommon in England in the reign of Elizabeth.

29. fear the enjoying: fear that I shall not enjoy.

30. amity: friendly relations.

33. where men enforcéd, etc. In this line the dramatist expresses the chief argument against torture. "It is pleasant," says Hudson, "to find Shakespeare before his age in denouncing this barbarous method of extorting truth." His denunciation probably met with little sympathy in 1598.

39. The word "go" is understood. (Compare II, 2, 126.)

44. a swan-like end. From Greek literature has come the tradition that the swan sings sweetly just before its death. In "Othello" we find "I will play the swan and die in music"; and in "King John" "this pale, faint swan, Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death." Ben Jonson addresses Shakespeare as "Sweet Swan of Avon!"

51. dulcet: soft and sweet.

54. presence: dignity of bearing or appearance.

56. The virgin tribute, etc. Hesione, the daughter of Laomedon, King of Troy, was chained by her father to a rock, in order to be devoured by a sea-monster, that he might thus appease the anger of the gods, Apollo and Poseidon. Hercules, or "young Alcides," killed the monster and freed the maiden, not, however, for love, but to get possession of the famous horses belonging to Laomedon. Portia compares herself to Hesione, and her servants standing about the room to the "Dardanian wives," or Trojan women.

59. blearéd visages. The faces of the Trojan women are blurred or dimmed with tears.

61. Live thou, I live. That is, "If thou live, or succeed, I live."

Song. Study the construction and meaning of this song very carefully. It seems to hint vaguely the way to the right choice. For instance, "fancy," in the first line, means apparently *love of things fantastic or showy*, the foolish fancy that has led the other suitors astray. What is the fate of this kind of love, as told in the song? Then again, do the rhymes of the first three lines, as you read them aloud, suggest one of the caskets above the others? Does not Bassanio's "so," when he begins to speak, show that he has listened to the words of the song, and possibly taken the hint?

74. still: always, continually, — as often in Shakespeare.

76. seasoned. "This carries on the metaphor suggested by *tainted*." (Rolfe.)

78. some sober brow: some serious, solemn person.

79. approve it: justify it, make it good.

81. simple: unmixed; uncombined with anything else, as in the expression, "This is the truth, pure and simple."

82. his: its, — as usual in Elizabethan writers.

84. stairs of sand. The Folio of 1623 (see page 141) has here "stayers of sand," that is, supports or banks of sand which would easily be washed away. Why do you think the editors generally prefer "stairs"? What picture in your mind does each leave? Which seems the more applicable to "false-hearted cowards"?

85. Hercules and frowning Mars. The mightiest of Greek heroes and the god of war serve as types of courage and strength in contrast to the "stairs of sand."

86. livers white as milk. A white liver was thought to be a "badge of cowardice." *Milk-livered* and *lily-livered* occur in other plays. (See note on "red blood," II, 1, 6.)

87. excrement: out-growth, hair, beard. In "Love's Labour's Lost" we find "dally with my excrement and my mustachio." The meaning is: cowards, in order to be considered brave, assume the mere outward signs and symbols of true valor.

88. Look on beauty, etc. This must be artificial beauty, procured by painting, ornaments, and show. This artificial beauty becomes more valuable the thicker it is laid on, and therefore is "purchased by the weight." Shakespeare often speaks of "made up" complexions, and always with biting sarcasm, as in "Hamlet": "I have heard of your paintings, too; God has given you one face and you make yourselves another."

91. lightest: most vain and fickle. (For the pun on two meanings of "light," see V, 1, 129, and note.)

92. crispéd: curled. "His hair is *crisp*, and black, and long."

93. wanton: playful, unrestrained.

94. Upon supposéd fairness: surmounting, — on the head of, — imagined beauty.

95. dowry: property; gift. Shakespeare often denounces the custom of wearing false hair, as in Sonnet 68 and "Love's Labour's Lost," IV, 3, 258. "Thatch your poor thin roofs With burdens of the dead," from "Timon of Athens," sounds very modern. Stow says: "Women's periwigs were first brought into England about the time of the massacre of Paris." That was in 1572, when Shakespeare was eight years old.

97. guiléd: full of guile, treacherous.

99. an Indian beauty. Not the English or European type of beauty, but rather emphatically *Indian* beauty, — that is, to Shakespeare's audience, *ugliness*. Professor Gummere says, "The beauteous scarf is the deceptive ornament which leads to the expectation of something *better* than an *Indian* beauty." Because of an apparent lack of contrast between "beauteous scarf" and "an Indian beauty," and because of the repetition of the word "beauty," the passage has been discussed and altered by the critics more than any other in the play. Some of the words suggested to take the place of "beauty" are: "feature," "dowdy," "favour," "gipsy," "visage," "deity," "idol," "blackness." Two large pages of fine print are given by Dr. Furness to this one word!

102. Hard food for Midas. A whole story in a phrase. Midas was a king of Phrygia who, according to the Greek legend, ob-

tained from the god Bacchus the power of turning whatever he touched into gold; but when his daughter and his food became hard metal, he prayed for relief, and obtained it by bathing in the river Pactolus, the sands of which thereafter glittered with gold.

103. common drudge: common slave, — that is, silver coin.

104. meagre: poor, insignificant.

106. Thy paleness. We must either emphasize *Thy*, in contrast to the *pale* of silver in line 103, or read *plainness* instead of *paleness*, which may be a blunder of the early printers.

109. as: that is, namely. **rash-embraced despair**: despair too rashly, too quickly felt.

110. green-eyed jealousy! In "Othello" Iago exclaims, "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy; It is the green-eyed monster. . . ."

113. scant this excess: make less this excess, — this "surfeit" of joy.

115. surfeit: have too much.

116. counterfeit: likeness, portrait. "Thou draw'st a *counterfeit* Best in all Athens." ("Timon of Athens," V, 1, 83.) **What demi-god**, etc. What man, with powers like those of a god, ever came so near creating a living thing?

118. the balls of mine: my own eyeballs.

127. unfurnished — with a companion; unaccompanied by the other eye.

127–129. how far, etc. Just as far as the sum of all my praise does injustice to this picture, so far this picture falls short of, — "limps behind," — Portia herself.

131. The continent: that which contains.

141. I come by note. According to the written directions in the scroll, I come to give a kiss and receive the lady.

142. contending in a prize: contending in a race for a prize.

158. livings: possessions, property. Later Antonio says to Portia, "You have given me life and *living*."

160. sum of — something. The dash is inserted before "something" to indicate that Portia hesitates for a term with which to describe herself modestly. "The full sum of me is — well, some-

thing, — not entirely ideal, to be sure, but such as can be found in — an unlessoned girl." **in gross**: all together. The figure here — "account," "sum," "in gross" — is drawn from a merchant's ledger.

165. her gentle spirit, etc. The force of the adjective "gentle" seems to be spread out through the whole phrase, so that it is equivalent to "her spirit gently commits itself to yours."

169. converted: turned over, transferred.

175. presage: portend, betoken, foretell.

176. my vantage to exclaim: my opportunity, or my sufficient ground, for complaining of you.

177. bereft: robbed, deprived.

179. in my powers. We should say, "in my powers of speech."

180. spoke. Both "spoke" and "spoken" occur in Shakespeare. (See II, 4, 5.)

183. blent: blended, mingled.

183–185. "Each cry is a 'something,' a word with a meaning, but when all are mixed together they become 'a wild of nothing' without meaning, — and yet not without meaning, for the very noise is expressive of delight." (H. L. Withers)

193. You can wish none from me. "I am sure," says Gratiano, "that you will wish no joy *away from* me, so that you will gain by my loss." He seems to be playing on the double meaning of *from*, *i.e.* "given by" and "taken from."

197. so: if, provided that.

200. the maid. Remember that Nerissa is not a *maid-servant*, as we use the term, but rather a companion and friend of Portia. The same relationship exists between Gratiano and Bassanio.

201. intermission: delay, standing idle and doing nothing.

204. as the matter falls: as matters have turned out.

206. very roof. That is, the roof of his mouth.

210. achieved: won. "If I achieve not this young modest girl" occurs in "The Taming of the Shrew."

211. so: provided that, — as in line 197 above.

213. Yes, faith: yes, indeed. Notice the play upon Bassanio's "do you mean good *faith?*"

216. infidel: one who was not a Christian. Not spoken here in scorn or bitterness.

221. very friends: real or true friends.

230. ope: An old form of "open," common in Shakespeare.

234. estate: condition, state. On the contrary, in line 262 we should use "estate" instead of "state." The words were used interchangeably.

235. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger, etc. As we already know the story of Jessica and the circumstances of her eloping with Lorenzo, she is artfully welcomed in dumb-show while the more important business of Antonio's letter takes up our attention.

237. royal: princely, kind and generous.

239. We are the Jasons, etc. Read again lines 168–172 of Act I, Scene 1, and note on line 170.

240. One critic suggests that we should read "fleets" instead of "fleece," thus making Salerio pun on the last word of Gratiano's speech. This is not improbable, but is it necessary for the sense?

241. shrewd: bad, evil, — the original meaning of the word.

244. constitution: nature, character.

245. constant: self-possessed, firm.

246. I am half yourself, etc. In "Julius Caesar" Brutus' wife — another Portia — says to her husband:

> "No, my Brutus,
> You have some sick offence within your mind,
> Which by the right and virtue of my place
> I ought to know; . . .
> . . . unfold to me, *yourself, your half,*
> Why you are heavy."

257. state. See note on 234 above.

260. mere: unqualified, absolute. Similarly in "Othello": "Certain tidings importing the *mere* perdition of the Turkish fleet."

265. ventures. See I, 1, 15, and note. **hit**: hit the mark, reached its goal, succeeded. (Compare "*hit* or miss.")

268. The dreadful touch, etc. See I, 1, 29–32.

271. discharge: pay, — as in the sentence "I will *discharge* thee" in "The Comedy of Errors."

274. confound: ruin, destroy, — as generally in writers of Shakespeare's time.

276. doth impeach, etc. Shylock threatens to bring action against the government of Venice for denying strangers equal rights with citizens.

278–279. magnificoes Of greatest Poet: the grandees, or chief men, of noblest rank.

279. persuaded: argued.

280. envious: malicious, hateful.

283. Chus. This name (spelled Cush), like Tubal, Shakespeare found in Genesis.

287. deny: forbid.

291. the best-conditioned and unwearied spirit. That is, the best disposed and most unwearied spirit. The superlative in "best" is carried forward mentally to "unwearied," with the result that "most" is omitted.

304. pay the petty debt twenty times over. One of the critics has pointed out that Portia offers to pay a sum equal "to at least one million dollars now." Of course she did not stop to calculate just what she was offering! Her love and enthusiasm lead her to perfectly natural and charming exaggeration.

309. cheer: countenance, look, face, — the original meaning of the word.

310. Since you are dear bought, etc. These words refer undoubtedly to the anxiety and distress of mind which Portia suffered during the time when her fate hung on the chance decision of her suitors. Notice the play on "dear."

316. between you and I. The fact that Shakespeare often wrote "I" for "me" is not peculiar to him. Writers of his time very generally disregarded the inflections of pronouns, using "she" for "her," "he" for "him," etc. Thus in line 21 of this

scene "I" is grammatically incorrect; indeed, the expression "between you and I" seems to have been almost an Elizabethan idiom. As a matter of fact, educated people even in the twentieth century, who otherwise speak correctly, get these same pronouns badly twisted.

323. No rest, etc. No delay shall come between us two. Notice the arrangement of the last four lines of the scene with the alternating rhymes. (See note on the last two lines of I, 1.)

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The main subject of Act II, we have seen, was the elopement of Jessica. Act III deals chiefly with Bassanio's winning of Portia. Why do you think Shakespeare inserted the Shylock-Tubal scene between these two main episodes?

2. Contrast the setting, the spirit, and the tone of the opening of this scene with the close of the last.

3. Contrast the Portia of these opening lines with the Portia who received Morocco and Arragon.

4. Why do you think Portia blames the "naughty times" rather than her father for the lottery of the caskets? (18–20.)

5. What is there gracious, womanly, and noble in Portia's words to Bassanio? (1–24.)

Does she seem to you to be too outspoken?

6. What does she mean by saying "I could teach you How to choose right"? How does she virtually do so? Has she kept her word to be "obtained only by the manner of her father's will"? (I, 2, 99–101.)

7. Explain in your own words just what the song means to you. Do you think it contains any hints? What are they?

8. What makes you think that Bassanio listens to the song while looking at the inscriptions on the caskets? What relation does it have to his train of thought? (73–101.)

9. Put into your own words Bassanio's arguments for choosing the leaden box. Compare his reasoning with that of Morocco and Arragon.

10. Would Bassanio's illustrations of his sermon on the text "So may the outward shows be least themselves" be suitable to use to-day? Can you think of others just as effective and true?

11. Of whom, and where, did Antonio make a remark very similar to Bassanio's "So may the outward shows be least themselves"? Quote the exact lines.

12. How would you act the part of Portia during Bassanio's deliberation upon the caskets? How at lines 104–107?

13. In what ways does this scene remind you of a fairy story?

14. What do you think of Portia's description of herself in 160–172? Do you like her more or less after reading these lines?

15. What is the dramatist's reason for having Gratiano and Nerissa marry, too?

16. Why do you think Salerio urged Lorenzo to accompany him to Belmont? (226–229.)

17. How will you explain Bassanio's words,

"all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, — I was a gentleman."?

Discuss our modern ideals of a gentleman as compared with those of an Englishman in the seventeenth century.

18. In what way is Jessica's evidence (282–288) in keeping with her character?

19. Why do you feel that Antonio's letter would be less effective if it were longer and more detailed? How does it seem characteristic of the writer?

20. At what point does the scene begin to turn from happiness and good cheer to tragedy? Is this change brought about naturally? Is it dramatically strong or weak?

21. How are the stories of the caskets, the pound of flesh, and the rings woven together at the close of this scene?

22. What do you think is the object of bringing Lorenzo and Jessica to Belmont? How is their arrival made to seem natural?

23. How is the play now "hovering between comedy and tragedy"? Can you surmise, without looking ahead, which way it is finally going to turn?

24. Compare the meter, construction, and substance of the three scrolls found in the caskets.

25. In what ways are the last four lines (319–323) like other scene-endings already noted? In what ways are they different?

ACT III

Scene 3

Evidently a day or two has elapsed since the last scene, for the bond has become forfeit, and Antonio has been arrested. It is the day before his trial.

2. gratis: without interest. Earlier in the play Shylock said of Antonio: "in low simplicity He lends out money *gratis*." Find the passage.

9. naughty: base, good for nothing. Compare this with Portia's "naughty times" and "a naughty world." The word generally had a stronger meaning than now. **fond**: foolish,—the original sense of the word. (Cf. II, 9, 27.)

14. dull-eyed: lacking perception, stupid.

18. impenetrable: hard-hearted.

19. kept: lived, dwelt. In New England country people still sometimes speak of the living-room as the "keeping-room."

20. bootless: useless, unavailing.

22. forfeitures: bonds or notes due to Shylock.

23. made moan: See I, 1, 126, and note.

25. Will never grant, etc. The duke will never allow this to hold good.

27. For the commodity, etc. "For if the advantages of traffic heretofore enjoyed by strangers in Venice be refused them, it will seriously impeach the justice of the state." (Rolfe.) See line 276 of the previous scene.

32. bated: depressed, reduced. Shylock has spoken of "bated breath" as "a lowered, or humble voice." Can you quote the passage?

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think Antonio wishes to say to Shylock? Is it something important, or does the significance of the scene lie elsewhere?

2. In what ways does this glimpse of Shylock seem preparatory to the trial of the merchant?

3. What is the effect of the repetition of "bond"? Do you think it is intentional?

4. What does Antonio mean by saying,

> "I oft delivered from his forfeitures
> Many that have at times made moan to me"?

Do you think this is the chief reason why Shylock hates his victim?

5. What, in your opinion, is the purpose of this scene? Could it be omitted as well as not? Explain your answer.

ACT III

Scene 4

After the lovers were married, Bassanio and Gratiano hurried away to Venice. Portia and the rest have apparently just come back from the church.

2. conceit: idea, conception. (Compare I, 1, 92, and note.)

3. amity: friendship, — between Bassanio and Antonio.

7. lover: friend, — as in line 17 below. So in "Julius Caesar": "Romans, countrymen, and *lovers*."

9. Than customary bounty, etc. Than your ordinary daily acts of kindness oblige you to be.

11. Nor shall not now. See a similar double negative in I, 2, 25.

12. waste: spend, pass, — not with any idea of unprofitably just "killing time."

14. needs: of necessity, — as in II, 4, 29 and in 18 just below.

14–15. a like proportion of lineaments: a similarity of features and character.

17. bosom lover: intimate friend, friend *of his heart*. In "Macbeth" King Duncan says of one of his subjects, "No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive our *bosom* interest."

20. semblance: likeness, image.

25. The husbandry and manage: The thrifty care and management. Hamlet says that "borrowing dulls the edge of *husbandry*." We use the verb to-day in such expressions as "to *husband* one's strength," and "to *husband* the resources."

30. husband: husband's. A similar ellipsis occurs in "Coriolanus": "Nor child nor woman's face." (See also III, 2, 291, and II, 1, 46.)

33. imposition: charge, task. Two lines further on, in "lays upon you," Portia translates the word literally from the Latin derivation.

46. thee. Notice that Portia changes from "you," when addressing Jessica and Lorenzo, to "thee," when addressing Balthasar, a servant. (See note on I, 2, 34.)

50. cousin. Shakespeare uses this word as we use "kinsman," — of anyone that is related to us, or *akin*.

52. with imagined speed: with all speed imaginable, or with the speed of imagination, — as we say "swift as thought."

53. tranect: ferry. The word has been found nowhere else, a fact which led Rowe and other critics to substitute for it "traject," as being nearer the Italian "tragheto," a ferry. This entire speech is often quoted by those who argue that Shakespeare must have been in Italy before writing the play.

56. convenient: suitable. (Compare II, 8, 45.) "Feed me with food *convenient* for me." (Prov. xxx. 8.)

60. in such a habit, etc. In such clothes that our husbands will think that we are furnished with what we do not really have, namely, manhood.

65. braver: more showy, finer. The word in this sense, and the noun "bravery," were often applied to clothes by writers of Shakespeare's day. "The Lord will take away the *bravery* of their tinkling ornaments." (Isaiah iii. 18.)

67. a reed voice: a squeaky, piping voice, like that of a boy

when it is changing. **mincing**: affected, overnice. As an adjective, the word is almost always applied to one's gait, or style of walking. Can you trace its connection with "*mince*-meat"?

69. quaint: clever, ingenious.

72. I could not do withal. I could not help it; it was not my fault. A common expression in the sixteenth century.

74. puny lies. Do you think this a forcible expression?

77. raw: crude, "green." Touchstone, poking fun at the shepherd Corin, says, "Thou art *raw!*" ("As You Like It," III, 2, 76.) **Jacks**: fellows. A term of contempt often found in Shakespeare. A most interesting word to study in a large dictionary.

60–78. It is interesting to compare Portia's bright and charming description of herself, when disguised as a "bragging Jack," with a passage in "As You Like It," written probably two years after "The Merchant of Venice." The situation is much the same, for Rosalind, the heroine of the play, is explaining to her companion how she will act when attired as a man.

> *Ros.* Were it not better,
> Because that I am more than common tall,
> That I did suit me all points like a man?
> A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
> A boar-spear in my hand; and — in my heart
> Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will —
> We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,
> As many other mannish cowards have
> That do outface it with their semblances.
>
> — *As You Like It*, I, 3, 116–124.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think this scene is often omitted in a modern presentation of "The Merchant"? What part of it is the most important?

2. What new purpose now appears for having Lorenzo and Jessica go to Belmont?

3. Compare Portia here with the Portia of earlier scenes. Of what particular incident are you reminded?

4. Do you think that Portia has already in her own mind arguments to offer on Antonio's behalf at the trial, or is she sending to her cousin, Doctor Bellario, for all her ideas? Discuss this problem from several angles. For instance, she says to Balthasar: "Be careful of what *notes* and *garments* he doth give thee." Yet would she have started out for the court-room in Venice, disguised as a lawyer, without something of her own to contribute?

ACT III

Scene 5

1–2. the sins of the father, etc. Another reference to the Bible. "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." (Exodus xx. 5, and elsewhere.)

3. fear you: fear for you, worry on your account.

4. agitation. Launcelot's blunder for "cogitation," or thought. Remember the clown's similar blunders all through II, 2. What ones do you recall?

9. enow: enough, — generally used with plural nouns.

10–11. will raise the price of hogs, etc. Launcelot is referring, of course, to the custom among Jews of not eating the flesh of the hog in any form. Remember Shylock's "Yes, to smell pork! . . . I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, . . . but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." (I, 3, 31–36.)

12. rasher: a thin slice of meat, — said only of bacon.

18. are out: at odds, out of harmony.

22. I think the best grace of wit, etc. "A shrewd proof," says Hudson, "that the poet rightly estimated the small wit, the puns and verbal tricks, in which he so often indulges," — to please, of course, the crowd in the pit of the theatre, who liked such "parrot-talk" and "wit-snapping."

27. Goodly Lord. A Shakespearean expression somewhat like

our "Lordy!" or "O, goody Lord!" **wit-snapper**: jester, punster. Compare this with the expression "to *crack* a joke."

32. Not so, sir, neither, etc. Launcelot plays upon the two meanings of the word "cover,"—to set the table and to put on one's hat.

33. quarreling with occasion. By punning and joking, Launcelot goes against, or slights, the main subject of conversation.

40. humors and conceits: feelings and fancies.

42. O dear discretion: discrimination, sound sense (just what Launcelot most lacks). **suited**: suited to each other, matched, arranged,—said probably in irony with just the opposite meaning.

45. A many fools: many a fool. We strangely enough use the article with "few," but no longer with "many."

46. garnished: equipped, furnished (with *words*, or possibly, with *discretion*, if Lorenzo is speaking ironically throughout the passage). **tricksy**: clever, "smartish."

47. Defy the matter: forsake, or slight, the matter in hand. The expression is almost exactly equivalent to "quarreling with occasion" in 33 above. "I know many fellows," says Lorenzo, "of higher rank, too, than Launcelot here, who in their fondness for playing on words and chasing after puns, sacrifice the matter they are talking about." (Compare this passage with lines 22–24, and see note.) **How cheer'st thou**: How do you feel? What cheer?

48. sweet: sweetheart. Often used by Shakespeare as a term of endearment.

54. mean it. Probably a misprint for "merit it," though "mean" may possibly be interpreted as "moderation," "the golden mean." The word, however, is nowhere else in Shakespeare used as a verb. Rolfe says of the expression *Mean it: intend to live an upright life.* This is one of those passages, happily fewer in "The Merchant" than in most of the other plays, for which every critic has a different suggestion, and upon which page after page of profitless comment has been written.

59. pawned: staked, wagered.

63. anon: soon, presently.

64. stomach: appetite, inclination. "He which hath no *stomach* to this fight, Let him depart!" ("King Henry V," IV, 3, 34.) Of course Jessica has in mind both her *inclination* to praise Lorenzo and her *appetite* for dinner.

67. Set you forth: set forth your virtues, praise you.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. This scene is never presented on the stage to-day. Discuss the reasons for omitting it altogether.
2. When do you think it takes place in relation to Portia's departure and the trial of Antonio?
3. Are you interested enough in Launcelot to want to see more of him?
4. What marked contrast does this scene make with that which follows? Is this perhaps its chief purpose?

ACT IV

Scene 1

1. What: well. Compare this with Shylock's "What, Jessica!" in II, 5, 3 and 4.

5. void and empty from, etc. Lacking any particle of mercy.

7. qualify: soften, moderate, mitigate.

8. obdurate: unmoved, hard.

9. And that. Shakespeare often uses "that" instead of repeating "since."

10. envy: ill-will, hatred, — the earlier meaning of the word.

13. tyranny: cruelty. The "very" merely emphasizes the *tyranny*, as we say, "he is a very rascal."

18. lead'st this fashion, etc. You are keeping up this show of hatred only until the final moment of action.

20. remorse: compassion, pity, — as usual in Shakespeare. Our "remorseless," in fact, means "pitiless."

21. apparent: not real, seeming.

22. where: whereas.

24. loose the forfeiture: release Antonio from the bond.

26. moiety: half, — but used often for any portion or part.

29. enow. See III, 5, 9, and note. **A royal merchant.** "This expression was well understood in Shakespeare's time, when Sir Thomas Gresham was honored with the title of *the royal merchant*, both from his wealth, and because he transacted the mercantile business of Queen Elizabeth." (Rolfe.) (See III, 2, 237.)

30. commiseration of his state: pity for his condition.

34. A gentle answer. It has been suggested that possibly the duke is punning here on the word "gentile." Why does this seem unlikely? (See note on III, 1, 30.)

35. possessed: informed. Remember Shylock's, "Is he yet *possessed* How much ye would?"

37. To have the due and forfeit: to have the forfeit which is due. A good illustration of hendiadys, — as, "with might and main" for "with main strength." An interesting construction to investigate.

39. your city's freedom: the rights of strangers in your city. (See note on III, 2, 276.)

43. But, say, it is my humor: But, let us say, it is my whim, — my special notion. Any peculiar quality of mind was a *humor*. "The Jew being asked a question which the law does not require him to answer, stands upon his right and refuses, but then adds in malignity, 'However, if you must have an answer, will this do?'" (Johnson.)

46. baned: poisoned. We have "ratsbane" = rat-poison, and "baneful," as "baneful gases."

47. A gaping pig. A Christmas dinner in England always has the boar's head served with a lemon in its open, *gaping*, mouth. "They stand *gaping* like a roasted pig" occurs in the "Elder Brother," a play by Fletcher, who was one of Shakespeare's fellow-dramatists. Malone quotes from Nashe, a companion poet, — "Some will take on like a mad man if they see a pigge come to table."

49–50. For affection, Mistress of passion, etc. For impulse, which controls our emotions, arouses in them various moods corresponding to itself, and these may be either moods of sympathy or hatred. The impulse, or "affection," here, of course, is the feeling caused by seeing a gaping pig or a cat.

56. lodged: settled, firm, fixed.

60. current: course. What picture does the figure make in your mind?

64. offence: sense of wrong, injured feeling.

66. think you question: remember that you argue or debate with the Jew. To-day we often use "question," as a noun, in this sense.

68. main flood: the ocean, the "main." **bate:** abate, decrease. "Time and *tide* wait for no man."

70. ewe. See I, 3, 84, and note.

73. fretten. An old participle form of fret, for *fretted* = vexed, agitated, swayed.

78. brief and plain conveniency: with as speedy and as prompt action as is suitable.

79. have judgement: receive my sentence.

85. doing no wrong. Shylock here means evidently by "wrong" that which is contrary to law. He argues that he is in the right when he claims the fulfilment of legal obligations.

88. in abject and in slavish parts: in low and servile duties.

96. dearly bought. Remember Portia's "Since you are *dear bought*, I will love you dear." Can you find the line?

100. upon my power: in accordance with my authority; by my legal right.

110. a tainted wether: a sick, diseased sheep of the flock, most fit, — meetest, — to die. Compare these words with Antonio's remarks about his sadness and melancholy at the opening of the play. Do you admire the calm and resignation of the merchant during the trial? Is this attitude in keeping with his character as it has been drawn for you by the dramatist?

119. sole . . . soul. These same words are played upon in

the opening lines of "Julius Caesar," — a passage that illustrates admirably the fashion of the times for quibbling and punning. These two words, however, were not pronounced by Shakespeare so nearly alike as they are to-day.

121. hangman: executioner. A former method of putting people to death was by cutting off their heads with an axe.

122. envy: hatred, malice. (See "envious" in III, 2, 280, and "envy" in 10 above.)

124. inexorable: unrelenting, unmoved by prayers. All the earlier editions of the play have "inexecrable," that is, "atrocious," "that which cannot be cursed enough," — a reading that several critics prefer. Which one, however, carries on better Gratiano's question, "Can no prayers pierce thee?"

125. And for thy life, etc. For allowing thee to live so long justice should be accused or impeached.

127. Pythagoras. A Greek philosopher who is said to have been the first one to teach the doctrine of transmigration of souls, that is, the passing of the souls of men after death into animals, from which they returned later to new-born children, and thus began another human period in their endless course. This strange old superstition may have sprung from the fact that certain striking characteristics of animals do appear in some people. Gratiano thus sees in Shylock the starved and bloody cruelty of a wolf. Have you ever seen persons who somehow suggested to you other animals, such as, for instance, a pig? A mule? A goose? A fox? A peacock? A mouse? A lion? A snake?

129. currish: suited to a cur, base.

130. hanged for human slaughter. In olden times animals were frequently tried in the courts, and, if found guilty, put to death like human criminals. In France as late as 1740 a cow was executed after a regular, formal trial.

131. fell: cruel, inhuman, barbarous.

132. unhallowed: unholy, cursed, detestable.

134. ravenous: hungry, furious and greedy.

138. cureless: incurable. The folio editions have "endless ruin."

145. Bellario's letter. Consider this letter carefully in its relation to Portia's part in the trial. (See questions and topics at the end of this scene.)

154. importunity: urgent request.

155. to fill up: to fulfil. **in my stead**: in my place, instead of my coming.

156. no impediment, etc. Let his youth be no hindrance to his receiving a high opinion. This sentence is another illustration of two negatives, where modern grammatical usage demands only one.

164. take your place. Portia comes as a judge, not as a lawyer. Therefore the duke invites her to take her place on the judge's bench.

165. difference: dispute, difference of opinion.

166. question: trial.

167. throughly. "Through" and "thorough" are different spellings of the same word. Shakespeare uses them interchangeably to suit the metre. In II, 7, 42, Morocco said that the "wilds of wide Arabia" were *throughfares* now.

172. Yet in such rule, etc. Yet in such due form that the law of Venice can raise no objection to your procedure.

174. within his danger. A legal expression about equivalent to "within his control."

177. On what compulsion must I? Portia has told Shylock that it is his duty *morally* to be merciful. "On what compulsion" shows that the Jew understands Portia's "must" as indicating a *legal* obligation.

178. The quality of mercy. We should say simply "mercy," or "the virtue, mercy." **strained**: forced, constrained by law, — referring to Shylock's "On what *compulsion must I?*"

180. it is twice blest: it has a two-fold power of blessing,— as the next line explains.

182. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. Mercy has its greatest power, — is a virtue of special glory, — in kings and lords. Professor Hudson remarks here: "It was evidently a favorite idea with Shakespeare that the noblest and most amiable thing is power mixed with gentleness."

184. shows: represents. **temporal power**: power in civil and political matters, as distinguished from spiritual power.

185. the attribute to: the symbol of, the thing attributed to awe-inspiring majesty. Notice again the hendiadys in "awe and majesty." (See line 37 above, and note.)

191. seasons: moderates, tempers.

193. in the course of justice, etc. If God, showing no mercy, were to act toward us merely on the principle of justice, none of us would ever reach heaven.

194. we do pray, etc. What words of the Lord's Prayer does Portio refer to here and in the next line?

196. spoke: spoken, — as in III, 2, 180, and often in Shakespeare.

197. mitigate: soften, render less severe, "season," as in 191 above.

198. follow: insist upon, follow up.

202. discharge: pay, as in III, 2, 271.

208. truth: honesty. It is malice, not honesty, that makes this appeal to the law.

209. wrest once the law to your authority: take the law for once into your own hands; use your power once and change the law.

215. error: not so much a "mistake" as a "departure from the regular course of law."

217. A Daniel. The story of the youthful Daniel judging and convicting the Elders is told in the "History of Susanna," a short book set apart from the Bible in the Apocrypha.

221. thrice. In line 204 Bassanio offered *twice the sum*. How do you account for Portia's changing the amount?

223. Shall I lay perjury, etc. Shall I perjure myself by breaking my oath?

224. forfeit: forfeited, due.

227. Nearest the merchant's heart. When the matter of a bond was first mentioned in I, 3, 135–140, Shylock said, you remember, that a pound of Antonio's flesh was "to be cut off and taken in what part of your body pleaseth me." Probably

before the bond was finally signed we are to imagine that the Jew expressed his choice to be "nearest the merchant's heart."

229. according to the tenor: according to the substance, or agreement, of the bond.

233. a well-deserving pillar. Similarly we often say, "He is a pillar of the church." What is the picture made by this figure?

236. I stay here on: I stand by.

242. Hath full relation, etc. The law clearly states that this penalty, which according to the bond is now due, should be paid.

245. more elder. Double comparatives and superlatives occur frequently in Shakespeare and in writers of his day. "The *most boldest* and best hearts of Rome," and "his *more braver* daughter," are examples from "Julius Caesar" and "The Tempest."

249. balance: balances, scales. Though used here in its singular form, the word is plural in sense, referring to the two parts which make the balance. (Note Shylock's "them" in the next line, referring to "balance.")

251. on your charge: at your expense.

258. I am armed, etc. Compare these words with Antonio's first words in this scene, lines 7–13.

262. it is still her use: it is always her custom.

269. speak me fair in death: "speak well of me when I am dead," or possibly, "speak well of the way in which I died." Which do you prefer?

271. a love: a friend, as in III, 4, 13 and 17.

275. presently: instantly. **with all my heart.** Antonio's jest, playing upon the double meaning of the expression "with all my heart," seems to increase the pathos of the scene. Can you explain why? Compare this with Shylock's pun on "dam" (III, 1, 30), and see note on that passage.

277. which. "Who" and "which" were used formerly to refer both to persons and to things. The first words of the Lord's Prayer illustrate this well.

290. Barrabas. A robber and murderer whom Pilate, to please the multitude, released from prison instead of Jesus. The name was generally accented on the first syllable in Shakespeare's time; to-day it is *Bar-ábbas*.

298. Come, prepare! Probably Shylock springs forward, knife raised, toward Antonio. With Portia's interruption, "Tarry a little," comes the turning point of the trial.

305. confiscate: confiscated, forfeited. Similar participles, used as adjectives, found in the plays are, *dedicate*, *situate*, *consecrate*.

321. just: exact.

322. substance: amount, mass.

324. one poor scruple. A scruple is an apothecaries' weight of twenty grains, or one twenty-fourth of an ounce.

325. in the estimation of a hair. If the scales "tip" more or less than a pound, by so little as the weight of a hair, thou diest, etc.

328. on the hip. A phrase from the language of wrestling, equivalent to "cornered," or "up a tree," from hunting. Gratiano's use of these words seems especially appropriate when we remember that Shylock himself used them of Antonio in the first act.

"If I can catch him once upon the hip
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him." (I, 3, 43.)

340. I'll stay no longer question: I'll wait for no further discussion.

341. The law hath yet another hold on you, etc. It has been suggested that what follows is Doctor Bellario's contribution to the case, and that the quibble about the blood and the "just pound" is Portia's. Do you agree? (See questions at end of scene.)

346. 'gainst the which: against whom he plots.

347. seize. A common legal term meaning to "take possession of by virtue of legal authority."

348. privy coffer: treasury.

349. in the mercy. We should say "*at* the mercy." Since

Shakespeare wrote, time has brought about perhaps more changes in the use of prepositions than in any other part of speech.

356. formerly: just now, a moment ago, "above."

366. Which humbleness, etc.: which due humility on your part may lead me to change to a fine.

367. Ay, for the state, etc. Apparently Portia means to suggest that the state's portion may be made a fine, but not Antonio's.

368. pardon. As in the duke's address to Shylock, the word has the meaning almost of "release," "absolve."

373. gratis: free of charge, for nothing. Remember Shylock's remark about Antonio, "He lends out money *gratis*." Where does it occur?

375. To quit the fine of, etc. To give up the fine of one half of Shylock's goods, which the Duke said would come to the "general state."

376. I am content, etc. The plan which Antonio suggests is this: "Let the duke remit the fine and give the Jew one half of his goods. I approve of this course, however, only on condition that I have the other half to give to Lorenzo and Jessica after Shylock's death, — until then using it as capital in my business." Shylock is thus to have one half of his estate; Antonio is to hold the other half in trust for Lorenzo and Jessica.

385. recant: withdraw, retract.

392. In christening. That is, when Shylock is made to "become a Christian."

393. ten more. This would make a jury of twelve to condemn him to the gallows, not baptize him.

396. I humbly do desire, etc. I humbly beg your grace's pardon. So in "Othello," "I humbly do beseech you of your pardon."

398. presently: immediately, at once, — as already several times in the play. Can you find one in this scene?

400. gratify: reward, recompense.

404. in lieu whereof: in consideration of which.

406. cope: reward, pay, — a very unusual meaning of the word. **withal.** "This emphatic form of *with* is used generally after the object at the end of a sentence." (Abbott, quoted by Furness.)

412. My mind was never yet more mercenary: I had no intention of making money when I came here, but only wanted to save you.

415. of force: of necessity, *perforce.* **attempt:** tempt, urge.

421. love: friendship, as two lines further on, and several times earlier in the play.

423. shall. We to-day would say "will."

425. to give: by giving.

427. methinks: I think, it seems to me. (See below, line 433.)

430. find it out by proclamation. "Proclamation" literally means a "calling out." Very likely Bassanio would hire boys to go about Venice "crying out," or advertising, for the most valuable ring in the city. (Look up "crier" and "town-crier" in a large dictionary.)

445. commandment. To make the metre of the line correct this word should be pronounced in four syllables, — "com-man-de-ment." In fact, it is so spelled in the early editions of the play, and elsewhere in Shakespeare.

449. you and I will thither presently: you and I will go there at once.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the setting of the court of justice as you imagine it. What is there impressive about the opening of the scene? Compare and contrast it with the scene of Bassanio's choice.

2. Describe Shylock's entrance. How does he look to you? Where does he stand in relation to the other characters? How would you act the part here at the opening of the scene?

3. Explain and comment upon Antonio's attitude toward his fate here and throughout the scene.

4. In what passages do Bassanio, Antonio, and Gratiano speak and act just as we should expect from what we already know of them?

5. What are Shylock's three distinct arguments for taking the pound of flesh? Are they convincing to you?

6. Do you think Bassanio is right when he says, "This is no answer, thou unfeeling man"?

7. Do you believe that Bassanio would really let Shylock have his "flesh, blood, bones, all" before Antonio should lose one drop of blood? Would the Jew accept this substitute? (Give reasons for your answer.)

8. Note that sooner or later all the women of the play wear the disguise of men. Why did such disguises seem more natural to the Elizabethan audience than they do to us to-day? (See page 186.)

9. What effect do the taunting remarks of Gratiano have throughout the scene? Would it be better to omit them?

10. What makes you think that the Duke had sent to Doctor Bellario some time before the trial?

11. How much of the letter from the "learned Doctor," in your opinion, is the absolute truth, and how much pure invention? (Support your opinion with quotations.)

12. Follow the course of Portia's journey and actions from the time she left Belmont until she enters the court-room. What do you find difficult to explain?

13. Is it necessary to have every minute incident of a story possible and explainable? (Give reasons for your answer, and illustrations from books you have read.)

14. Why do you think Portia urges Shylock to be merciful? Do you believe that she really hopes to change his mind?

15. What calls forth Portia's eloquent plea for mercy?

16. Why does Portia, in your opinion, keep Antonio in suspense, and at first seem to favor Shylock?

17. In what way is she far-sighted in her offer of "thrice thy money"?

18. What is the humor of the situation in lines 276–287?

19. Explain how these lines (276–287) are a sort of relief to the "tragic strain of the trial."

20. Picture the scene on the stage at the moment Shylock cries, "A sentence! Come, prepare!" What will you have Bassanio do at this moment? Antonio? Gratiano? The Duke? Shylock?

21. What do you think Portia does when she says, "Tarry a little"?

22. In what way is this expression, "Tarry a little," the climax of the scene and the turning-point of the whole play?

23. What do you think of Portia's arguments against taking the pound of flesh? Would they hold in a court to-day?

24. Explain what Shylock's thoughts and feelings, in your opinion, are when Portia says, "Why doth the Jew pause?"

25. What does Dr. Furness mean when he says that the play at this point (line 339) is "trembling between tragedy and comedy"?

26. How might the dramatist have made it a tragedy here? Why do you think he did not do so?

27. Put yourself in Shylock's place and imagine just what you would have done at this moment of the trial. Does Shakespeare have him act consistently with his character, as you understand it?

28. What is Portia's third point against Shylock? Do you think this last argument stronger or weaker than her first two? Give your reasons.

29. What part of the case against Shylock do you believe was furnished by Dr. Bellario? What, if any, by Portia?

30. Describe Shylock's departure from the court-room. How, in your judgment, does he look and act? How would you play the part here?

31. What are your own feelings toward the old man when he says:

"I am not well: send the deed after me
And I will sign it"?

32. "To the audience of 1600 Shylock's defeat and abject misery were comic; with Gratiano it jeered and hooted. To us to-day the same scene is pathetic and almost tragic." Explain, as far as you can, this change of feeling since 1597. (See page 103.)

33. How far do you think Shakespeare shared the feelings of his audience as expressed by Gratiano? Do you see any evidence that he looked upon the scene from the twentieth century point of view?

34. What do you think of the conditions laid down by Antonio in lines 374–384? Is there any one of these that seems to you especially cruel and entirely unnecessary? Why so?

35. Picture Shylock after he leaves the court. Would the play be improved, in your judgment, if we were given another glimpse of the old man?

36. Contrast the spirit and tone of the last part of this scene with that of the trial when Shylock was on the stage. How do you account for the change?

37. Why do you think some critics believe that the play should end with Shylock's exit? What is your own opinion?

38. Do you understand now why Kean, Booth, Irving, and other great actors have taken the part of Shylock rather than that of Bassanio or Antonio?

39. Why do you think this "trial scene" is ranked among the greatest in Shakespeare's plays? In what ways is it superior, in your judgment, to the scene of Bassanio's choice?

40. Quote the three finest passages in the scene and give reasons for your selection.

ACT IV

Scene 2

5. You are well o'erta'en: you are fortunately overtaken; I am glad I've found you.

6. upon more advice: upon further reflection or consideration. Remember that Bassanio said in the first scene of the play that he shot another arrow "with more advised watch."

16. old swearing. The word "old" was evidently used in Shakespeare's time in the familiar, playful sense of "great," "fine," — much as it is to-day. For instance, we have no thought of age when we speak of "a high *old* time," nor when we say to a friend, "Well, how are you, *old* chap?" nor when, upon finding Bobby eating the jam, we exclaim, "You *old* sinner!"

18. outface: brave, defy, look them out of countenance.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What two purposes does this short scene seem to fullfil? Why should we expect to find it entirely omitted in a modern presentation of the play?

2. What piece of the plot is now left to be developed? Is this important enough in itself to sustain your interest?

3. Do you already see how this part of the story is going to give the final touch of comedy and make a happy ending?

4. In what spirit, and for what purpose, do you think Portia and Nerissa get their husbands' rings?

5. Why do you think Shakespeare leaves to our imagination the conference between Nerissa, disguised as the clerk, and Gratiano?

6. When does this scene take place in relation to the trial?

ACT V

Scene 1

It is late evening of the day of the trial, — indeed, before the scene closes Portia says, "It is almost morning." (See p. 106.)

1. The moon shines bright. "The poet's pen has nowhere given more striking proof of its power than in the Scene of the Garden of Belmont. We find ourselves transported into the grounds of an Italian palazzo of the very first class, and we soon perceive them to be of surpassing beauty and of almost boundless extent. . . . There are terraces and flights of steps, cascades and fountains, broad walks, avenues, and ridings, with alcoves and banqueting-houses in the rich architecture of Venice. It is evening; a fine evening of summer, which tempts the masters of the scene to walk abroad. . . . The moon is in the heavens, full-orbed and shining with steady lustre. On the greensward fall the ever-changing shadows of the lofty trees, which may be mistaken for fairies sporting by moonlight; where trees are not the moonbeams 'sleep upon the bank.' The distant horn is heard; and even sweeter music floats upon the breeze." (Hunter, quoted by Furness.)

When the curtain rose for this scene in the production of the play by Sir Henry Irving, the audience sat hushed and spell-bound by the beauty of the moon-lit garden before them, and then, often before a word was spoken, broke into loud applause for the setting. Was this, however, Shakespearean? (See p. 182.)

As you read this act notice the remarkable difference between it and the tense, almost tragic trial scene that has just closed. Here we have comedy, pure romance, beauty, and happiness. Shakespeare usually ends his plays in this quiet fashion, and not at the very climax of excitement.

in such a night. Another illustration of the change in the use of prepositions. Of course we would say, "*On* such a night." (See note on IV, 1, 349.) The repetition of this phrase has

almost the effect of a refrain that gives "added charm to one of the most beautiful passages that Shakespeare ever wrote."

4. Troilus. A Trojan prince, one of King Priam's sons. He fell in love with Cressida, the daughter of Calchas, who during the siege of Troy had deserted to the Greeks. The story forms the theme of one of Shakespeare's minor tragedies, "Troilus and Cressida." The poet undoubtedly got the material for this play, as well as the suggestions for Cressid, Thisbe, and Dido in this scene, from Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida" and "Legend of Good Women."

7. Thisbe. A Babylonian maiden, who, planning to meet her lover by night at the tomb of Ninus, reached the spot, only to be frightened away by a lioness. She fled, leaving her veil behind, which the animal tore to pieces and covered with blood. Soon after Pyramus appeared, and believing that Thisbe had been murdered, killed himself. A little later the maiden returned, and seeing her lover lying dead on the ground, put an end to her own life.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which is beautifully told by the Roman poet Ovid in the fourth book of his "Metamorphoses," Shakespeare uses at length in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," where the legend is acted out in burlesque by the workmen of Athens for the entertainment of the king and queen.

Shakespeare seems to have been particularly fond of Ovid, whose poems he may have read in the original Latin, but more likely in Golding's translation, which was published in 1564, the the very year of our poet's birth.

10. Dido. The founder and queen of Carthage, an ancient city on the northern shores of Africa. She fell in love with Æneas, who after the fall of Troy visited Carthage in the course of his wanderings. The hero, however, urged by the prophecies of the gods, sailed away to found Rome and a new empire in Italy. **willow.** The willow was a symbol of grief for the dead, and also of forsaken, unrequited love.

11. waft: wafted, waved.

13. Medea. It was by the aid of the sorceress, Medea, daughter of the King of Colchis, that Jason finally won the Golden Fleece. With her the hero then fled from her enraged father back to Greece, where he married the enchantress. According to the legend as told by Ovid, she drew blood from the veins of aged Æson, Jason's father, and supplied its place with the juice of herbs, thus restoring to him his youthful strength and vigor.

Where have we found already twice in this play references to the famous old story of Jason and the Golden Fleece?

15. steal. Though this word is generally explained in its literal sense of "rob," referring to the ducats and jewels that Jessica carried away from her father's house, may we not think that Lorenzo merely means "steal away," "elope"? When he refers to himself in the next line as "an unthrifty (poor) lover," he may be simply contrasting himself to "the *wealthy* Jew," and not suggesting that Jessica stole to provide his own lack of money. What are your objections to the explanation of "steal" as meaning "rob"?

21. shrew: a woman of scolding, nagging, disagreeable temper. One of Shakespeare's comedies is "The Taming of the Shrew." Lorenzo uses the word, of course, in the playful spirit of the whole scene.

23. out-night you: "go you one better" in these examples of certain famous nights. So we have "out-number," "out-sail," "out-sleep," etc.

31. holy crosses. "These are very common in Italy. Besides those in churches, they mark the spots where heroes were born, where saints rested, where travellers died. They rise on hill-tops and at the intersection of roads." (Knight.)

35. nor have we not. Remember other double negatives of which we have spoken. (See I, 2, 25 and II, 1, 43.)

39. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! Launcelot seems to be trying to imitate the sounds of the post-horn. (See below in 46 and 47.)

46. post: messenger.

47. horn. Messengers and "postmen," in olden times, carried

horns, which they blew on approaching a place where they had something to deliver.

49. expect: await.

51. signify: announce.

57. become the touches: suit the notes of, etc. Do you agree with this statement?

59. patines. A paten, or patine, is a small plate, usually made of gold, on which the Eucharist, or consecrated bread, is presented to communicants.

60. orb: circle, sphere, — here, of course, star. "In hardened *orbs* the school-boy moulds the snow." (Gay, "Trivia," II, 329.)

61. in his motion: in its moving, revolving. Literature is full of references to the "music of the spheres." As far back as the times of the Greek philosopher Plato (400 B.C.), the theory existed that in their movements the heavenly bodies made harmony heard by the gods alone. "His" is again used for "its" in 82.

62. still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins: ever singing together to the wide-eyed angels. "One of the most magical lines in Shakespeare," says Professor Withers. Changing a word of it, to make it a bit clearer, spoils it. For instance, it is impossible to put into words the beauty and imagery suggested by the poet's adjective "young-eyed." In "Othello" he has, "Patience, thou young and *rose-lipped* cherubin." Why do you prefer "young-eyed"? **cherubins.** The word "cherub," of Hebrew origin, has two plural forms, "cherubs" and the Hebrew "cherubim." The singular form, "cherubin," came into the language from the French, and occurs in the poets of Shakespeare's time oftener than does "cherub." (See note above on "still quiring.")

63. Such harmony, etc. A harmony, similar to that of the moving stars, is in all of us, — immortal souls; but so long as this flesh of ours (this "muddy vesture of decay") is a clog and obstruction to our souls, we cannot hear it. Or briefer and more freely: Our souls, like the stars, are in perfect tune with God, but not until after death are we able to perceive that it is so.

Hallam calls this "the most sublime passage, perhaps, in Shakespeare."

66. Diana: the moon, for in Greek mythology Artemis, or Diana, was the goddess of woodland sports, the chase, and the moon. (See line 109 below, and note.)

71. wanton: playful, frolicsome.

72. unhandled: unbroken. In the "Tempest" Ariel speaks similarly of "unbacked colts."

73. Fetching: executing, making, — as in the expression "fetching a sigh."

77. a mutual stand: a halt all together, as though by common agreement.

80. Orpheus. A legendary hero and musician of Greece, the son of Apollo and Calliope, who was said to have invented the lyre. Besides the legend that he could move stones and trees with his music, the most famous story connected with him was his expedition to Hades, where, by playing on the lyre, he moved the gods of the lower world to release his lost bride, Eurydice. He was one of the heroes who accompanied Jason on the quest of the Golden Fleece. Shakespeare knew the story of Orpheus from his favorite Ovid.

> Orpheus with his lute made trees,
> And the mountain tops that freeze,
> Bow themselves when he did sing.
>
> — *Henry VIII*, III, 1, 3.

81. stockish: like a stock or stick of wood; lifeless. (Compare the expression "stock-still.")

83. that hath no music in himself. Not the man who does not play some instrument or sing, but the man who has not the least bit of appreciation of music.

84. concord: harmony.

85. spoils: plundering, violence.

86. The motions of his spirit: the impulses or workings of his mind are as black as night.

87. affections dark as Erebus: feelings or emotions as dark as the lower-world.

91. So shines a good deed. Who said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works?" **naughty:** evil, wicked. So earlier in play "thou naughty gaoler," and "these naughty times." Can you find these passages?

95. state: dignity, station or position of rank.

99. without respect: without regard to circumstances, by itself.

103. attended: attended to, noticed with close attention.

104–106. The nightingale, etc. "The nightingale," Portia says, "is considered the most beautiful of songsters because it sings just when we enjoy sweet music most, and really the difference between it and the wren is not in their songs, but in the hearer's mind and feelings." Do you agree with her?

107. by season, seasoned are, etc. By being well-timed, things are often made to obtain the praise they deserve, and to show their true excellence. Notice the play on two meanings of "season."

109. Endymion. A youthful and beautiful shepherd who was loved by the goddess Diana and conveyed by her to Mount Latmos in Caria where she threw him into a perpetual slumber, kissed by the rays of the moon. The story has been a favorite one with the poets of every age. The suggestion here seems to be that the moon is slowly setting, or sinking behind a cloud.

112. cuckoo. A bird of no musical ability. The word is an attempt to imitate the note uttered by the male in the mating season.

115. speed: prosper.

121. tucket: a few notes, or a "flourish" on the trumpet.

128. If you would walk, etc. "If you were to walk forth always at night," says Bassanio, "it would always be day with us, even as it is now on the other side of the world." The Antipodes (four syllables) are the regions, or peoples, *opposite our feet*, on the other side of the globe.

129. Let me give light, etc. Bassanio has paid Portia the extravagant compliment of suggesting that she is as brilliant or luminous as the sun. True to her own character and to the

spirit of this happy scene, she quickly turns the compliment into a pun on the word "light," which she neatly carries on into the next line. The second "light" = fickle, flighty, of loose moral character. Do you remember two other places earlier in the play where this same word has been similarly played upon?

132. God sort all: God dispose all things!

136. Sense: reason.

137. bound for you. That is, by Shylock's bond, — thus playing on Bassanio's use of "bound" in its moral sense of "obliged," "indebted." One critic says of this speech: "Portia's play on *bound* is an admirable instance of the cleverness with which she manages to be grateful to Antonio without being formal or tiresome."

138. acquitted of: rewarded for.

141. scant this breathing courtesy: cut short this courtesy of words. In II, 9 the servant used the expression "courteous breath" for "courteous words"; and in "Macbeth" the king speaks of "mouth-honor, breath."

146. whose posy was, etc. Whose motto was just like the verses that cutlers engrave on their knife-blades. The custom of putting inscriptions, or mottoes, on the inner side of rings was very common until the close of the 17th century. A collection of these Love Posies, many hundred in number, has been printed from a manuscript which was written about 1596, — perhaps in the very year that our play was composed. "Cutlers' poetry" has come to be a synonym for poor, silly love-verses.

154. respective: considerate, mindful, regardful. "You have too much *respect* upon the world." Who said this, and about whom was it spoken?

160. scrubbéd: stunted, undersized, scrubby.

162. prating: talkative, chattering.

170. leave it: part with it, — as in line 148.

172. masters: contains, comprehends.

174. An t'were to me, etc. If this had happened to me, I should be "simply furious"!

175. I were best. We should say "I had better."

187. void: empty. Do you remember the place where Shylock used this word as a verb?

195. virtue: power, — as in the expressions "a medicine of great *virtue*," "the magnet has lost its *virtue*."

197. contain: keep, retain.

195–198. the ring. "The repetition of *ring* in these lines, with everybody, spectators included, party to the joke (except the lovers and Antonio) gives a touch of farce and jollity to a situation that must not even hint at tragic danger." (F. B. Gummere.)

201. wanted. That is, "as to have wanted or lacked."

201–202. the modesty to urge, etc.: the modesty to insist upon a thing held as sacred.

206. a civil doctor: a Doctor of Civil Law.

212. enforced. As a gentleman, Bassanio was morally obliged to send the ring to the Doctor.

213. shame and courtesy. That is, with shame not to seem ungrateful, and with desire to show my gratitude.

216. candles of the night. In "Romeo and Juliet" and in "Macbeth" Shakespeare speaks of the stars as candles:

"Night's candles are burnt out."

224. well advised: very prudent, cautious.

235. double. The word suggests something bad, — duplicity, double-dealing.

239. wealth: welfare, benefit, — as in our word "commonwealth," which really means "the good that men have in common."

240. which. This refers back, of course, to the loan which Antonio made of his body, — the pound of flesh.

241. miscarried: gone wrong, been lost. Where did Antonio say, "My ships have all *miscarried*"?

243. advisedly: deliberately.

244. surety: bail, guarantor, sponsor. Do you remember where Portia said, "The Frenchman became his *surety*"?

259. richly: richly laden. Compare the words of Bassanio, "In Belmont is a lady *richly* left."

263. living: means of livelihood, property, — as in Portia's wish that for Bassanio's sake she might "in virtues, beauties, *livings*, friends, exceed account." (III, 2, 158.) How had Portia given Antonio "life," as well as "living"?

265. road: harbor. When did Salanio speak of "peering in maps for ports and piers and *roads*"?

271. manna. According to the story told in the book of *Exodus*, the Israelites, when fleeing from Egypt, were kept from starving in the wilderness by a divinely supplied food that fell from the heavens like rain. "They called the name thereof *Manna*; and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." (Ex. xvi. 31.)

275. inter'gatories. A shortened form of "interrogatories" = questions. The expression "charged upon interrogatories" was a legal term of the Elizabethan courts. Once more before the play closes Portia reminds us of the lawyer's part she played by using legal language when she says, "Come, let's go in, and there we'll promise to answer all your questions."

277. fear: be anxious about, worry about. Compare this use of the word with Launcelot's remark to Jessica, "Therefore, I promise you, I *fear* you." (III, 5, 3.)

278. sore: exceedingly, much.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is there especially beautiful about the scene in the garden? Describe it as you see it.

2. How does this scene differ, in spirit as well as in setting, from the rest of the play?

3. Do the references to Cressida, Thisbe, Dido, and Medea seem natural and appropriate? Would they be understood and appreciated as much to-day as by the audiences of Shakespeare's age?

4. Why do you think Launcelot is introduced once again before the play closes?

5. What does Lorenzo mean when he says :

"Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony" ?

Do you agree with him? Give other illustrations.

6. Do you agree with Lorenzo that "the man that hath no music in himself" cannot be trusted? Defend your answer.

7. What will you say of the fact that Dr. Johnson, Sir Walter Scott, and other great men "never could distinguish one tune from another"?

8. Do you think that the sentiments expressed here about music are intended to be merely Lorenzo's feelings, or are they Shakespeare's as well? Expand upon this subject, by pointing out when and where in the play you think the dramatist is speaking to us through his characters.

9. What reasons can you see for having Nerissa, rather than Portia, first discover the absence of her husband's ring?

10. Does it heighten the amusement of the ring episode to have us in the audience know the true facts, or would it be better to have us as much in the dark as are Bassanio and Gratiano ?

11. Just when did the story of the rings begin ? What important part of the plot do they bring to a happy conclusion?

12. Describe the scene and the facial expressions of the various characters when Bassanio exclaims, "By heaven, it is the same I gave the Doctor !"

13. Can you explain how it is that Portia knows of the merchant's argosies having "richly come to harbor" when Antonio himself is ignorant of their return? Do you think there is any reason for her unwillingness to tell "by what strange accident" she heard this good news?

14. Why does Shakespeare, in your opinion, introduce the subject of Antonio's ships again? Have we not lost interest in them?

15. Does the play end to your satisfaction? Can you suggest a different ending that would please you more?

16. As you now look back, do you think the play ought to

have been concluded with the defeat of Shylock? Why did the poet generally end his plays with a quiet, calmer scene after the excitement of the climax? Is this the modern fashion?

17. What other scenes besides this one are written wholly in verse form? Why do you think prose would be unsuitable here? (Compare this scene with III, 1 in construction and form. Why did the poet choose prose for one and verse for the other?)

18. "When Portia invites her company to enter her palace to refresh themselves after their travels, and talk over 'these events at full,' the imagination, unwilling to lose sight of the brilliant group, follows them in gay procession from the lovely moonlit garden to marble halls and princely revels, to splendor and festive mirth, to love and happiness." (Mrs. Jameson.)

Do you prefer thus to follow them in imagination, or would you rather have Portia "answer all things faithfully" in the garden for our benefit? Why does the dramatist leave questions and explanations to our imagination?

19. What lines of this scene have you ever heard before? Quote three passages that you especially like, and give reasons for your choice.

20. "Here is pure romance," says Professor Gummere, "comedy as Shakespeare understood it, . . . to make us forget the tempest of threatened tragedy." Explain this comment on Act V. Do you agree with it?

SUBJECTS FOR ORAL AND WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS

[Other subjects for discussion and written exercises will be found at the end of the notes on each scene. Subjects starred (*) are taken from college entrance examinations of recent years.]

1. The Story of the Three Caskets.*

[Tell in your own words the story of the winning of Portia. This can be made interesting by having Portia tell the story in the first person, either to a friend after her marriage, or in the form of a journal.]

2. The Story of the Pound of Flesh.*

[Put the story, as related by Shakespeare, into your own words. It may be well to have it told by Bassanio to Portia, or by Antonio to the Duke.]

3. The Blending of the Two Stories in "The Merchant of Venice."*

[Point out how Shakespeare has woven the stories of the caskets and the pound of flesh together. How are the characters of one connected with those of the other? Do you think the plot is skilfully made?]

4. The Relation of Act V to the Rest of the Play.

[Explain the purpose of the last act, and show how it grows out of what has gone before. Give your reasons for the poet's adding this act, and not ending the play with the court-room scene.]

5. The Feeling toward Jews in Shakespeare's Time.

[From what Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, and others in the play say of Shylock, show that the Jews were hated and despised then because of their money-lending (usury) and their religion. See also page 103 "The Case of Dr. Lopez."

6. Shakespeare's Treatment of Shylock.*

[Do you think Shakespeare wants us to sympathize with Shylock at all? Why do we generally feel sorry for him on the stage to-day? Quote passages in support of your opinions.]

7. The Elements of Shylock's Character.*

[Point out the places and the ways in which Shylock shows his greed, his cruelty, his hatred, his passion for revenge. What good qualities do you find in him?]

8. Antonio and Shylock.

[Explain the relations between these two men at the opening of the play, and write a defence of Shylock's feelings and actions based upon I, 3, 95–120.]

9. Antonio as a Christian Gentleman To-day.*

[Point out in what ways Antonio falls short of our standards of a gentleman. Do you think he can be defended on the ground of our different ideals to-day?]

10. The Melancholy Antonio.

[Follow his sadness from the opening lines throughout the play. What is the effect of this melancholy upon the whole drama? Do you think it gives a darker color to Shylock's cruelty? How?]

11. The Story of Antonio's Trial.

[Make this life-like and personal by having the story told by a spectator in the court; by Gratiano to Lorenzo; by Nerissa to Jessica; or by Shylock to Tubal. Try to keep the point of view and the spirit of the one who tells the story.]

12. Portia's Part in the Trial.*

[An account of Portia's actions and words while in the court room.]

13. Portia's Victory over Shylock.*

[Give your own opinion of her arguments. Were they her own, or furnished her by Dr. Bellario? Do you think she is perfectly fair to Shylock?]

14. The Excitement of the Trial Scene.

[Show how hope and fear fluctuate in the hearts of Shylock, Bassanio, Antonio, and the spectators throughout the trial. Explain the effect of these ever-changing emotions.]

Subjects for Compositions.

15. Portia's Suitors.*

[Give an account of them, telling who they are, whence they come, and what you think of them.]

16. Morocco and Arragon.*

[A comparison of their actions, words, and reasoning over the caskets. Which do you like the better? Why do they both fail?]

17. Bassanio's Choice.

[Give in your own words Bassanio's arguments for the three caskets. Compare his reasoning with Morocco's and Arragon's.]

18. The Story of Launcelot.

[Tell the story of Launcelot, from the discussion between his conscience and the Devil, to his last appearance in Act V.]

19. The Purpose of Launcelot in the Play.*

[Explain how Launcelot, besides being the clown, serves other purposes. Why would you not omit his part under any consideration?]

20. A Character Sketch of Gratiano.

[Remember what Bassanio says of him in I, 1, 114–120. Why do you like him? Compare him with Antonio on the one hand, and with Launcelot on the other.]

21. The Elopement of Jessica.*

[It may be interesting to have Gratiano tell the story of this event to Nerissa at Belmont, or Jessica herself may write it in a letter to a friend.]

22. What I Think of Jessica.

[Give your own opinion of Jessica's character. Do you defend her for deceiving her father, stealing his money, and becoming a Christian? Were her actions looked upon differently in Shakespeare's time?]

23. Why I Like Portia.

[Try to point out just what it is in Portia that makes her so interesting, so charming, and so lovable.]

24. The Minor Characters of the Play.*

[What parts do Nerissa, Lorenzo, Old Gobbo, the Duke, etc., fill in the play? Show how, though minor characters, they stand out clearly with distinct individualities, and are necessary to the plot.]

25. The Most Interesting Person in the Play.

[Support your choice with reasons of your own, and if possible with quotations.]

26. Shakespeare's Skill in Character Drawing.*

[How does Shakespeare, in your opinion, make such clear pictures of his characters? Quote passages and scenes that especially reveal the true nature of Shylock, Antonio, Portia, Bassanio, etc.]

27. The Inscriptions on the Caskets.*

[What does each mean to you? Do you think they are skilfully worded? Deceptive or suggestive? Compare them with the inscriptions in the story which Shakespeare used for the foundation of his play. See page 100.]

28. The Scrolls in the Caskets.

[Tell how and by whom each was found, and compare their meanings.]

29. *a.* Shylock and Isaac of York.*
b. Jessica and Rebecca.*
c. Launcelot and Wamba.*

[Those who have read Scott's "Ivanhoe" will find it interesting and profitable to compare and contrast these characters. Remember that "The Merchant of Venice" was written in 1597; "Ivanhoe" in 1819. The scene of the novel, however, is much earlier than that of the play.]

30. The Ending of the Play.

[Explain how the conclusion is perfectly satisfactory to you, or give definite suggestions for a different ending. What, for instance, would you add? Or would you omit a part of Act V?]

Subjects for Compositions.

31. The Less Important Scenes of the Play.*

[Imagine yourself a stage manager, and decide what scenes you would omit in your presentation of the play to-day. Give your reasons.]

32. My Favorite Passages in "The Merchant of Venice."

[Quote several and explain your choice.]

33. The Title of the Play.*

[Discuss "The Merchant of Venice" as a title. Suggest others, such as "The Jew of Venice," and consider the merits of each.]

34. The Merchant of Venice: Comedy or Tragedy.*

[Is it right to class this play with Shakespeare's comedies? In what ways do you think it is less a comedy now than in 1597 ?]

35. Prose and Verse in the Play.

[Quote passages of both types; note the circumstances and character of each; state what principles you draw from these about Shakespeare's use of prose and verse forms.]

36. References to the Bible in "The Merchant."

[Make a collection of all references to the Bible in the play. What conclusions do you draw about Shakespeare's knowledge and use of the Scriptures?]

37. References to Mythology in "The Merchant."

[Treat this subject similarly to No. 36.]

38. Shakespeare's Feeling for Music.

[Explain Lorenzo's words about music in Act V. What do they show about Shakespeare? Do you agree with their sentiment?]

39. The Duration of the Play.

[Try to account for the time which the play occupies. What difficulties do you meet, and how do you explain them? This subject is

considered at the beginning of the notes on each scene, and more fully on page 106.]

40. Lessons One Learns from "The Merchant of Venice." *

[If Shakespeare had any purpose in writing the play, state what you think it is. What lessons does one learn from the incidents connected with Antonio? Shylock? Portia? Bassanio?]

IMAGINATIVE SUBJECTS

The following subjects call for imagination and originality as well as knowledge of the play itself. Many of them may be told in the first person in the form of a letter or journal. Some may well be written in dialogue, or as a one-act short play, which then may be presented by members of the class. In all of them, start with the facts and suggestions given you by Shakespeare. Then use your imagination freely, though what you imagine should always be possible and the more probable the better.

41. Other Causes of Antonio's Sadness.

[Name the causes given by his friends in Act I, discuss them, and add others of your own.]

42. The Early Life of Bassanio.

[Something about Bassanio before the play, especially the story of his "disabling his estate" and borrowing from his friend. See I, 1, 121–129.]

43. The Death of Portia's Father.

["Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations." The story of Portia's father and his plan for his daughter's marriage can be told in dialogue between Portia and Bassanio.]

44. A Day with Portia and Nerissa.

[This may be either before the play opens, or after their marriage when they visit each other.]

Subjects for Compositions.

45. An Evening with Portia's Suitors.

[You have the names and characters of the suitors given you in I, 2. Write a one-act play, laying the scene at Belmont the evening before their departure.]

46. Launcelot's First Interview with Shylock.

[This dialogue will give you a splendid opportunity to imitate Launcelot's blundering and old Shylock's stern severity.]

47. Old Gobbo goes to Venice.

[The story of Gobbo's journey to visit his son, the "dish of doves," etc. A very pretty little scene, once written by a high-school student, described Launcelot's home in the country, old Gobbo's talk with Marjory, his wife, about their son, and the father's departure for Venice.]

48. Shylock dines with Antonio and Bassanio.

[Read Shylock's words to Jessica, II, 5, 11–19, and then give an account of the banquet, the conversation, and the departure of Shylock. This also may well be done in dramatic form.]

49. Jessica's Home Life.

["Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness."

Give us a glimpse of Shylock's home that will support Jessica's strong language.]

50. Shylock discovers His Daughter's Flight.

[This may well include his return to his house after dining with Bassanio, and also the discovery that his money and jewels have been stolen. See page 228 for Sir Henry Irving's method of acting this scene.]

51. Shylock interviews Tubal.

[A dialogue in which Shylock will do most of the talking, like III, 1, 72–116. Imitate the style of that scene, giving Shylock's directions to Tubal for finding his daughter.]

52. Morocco after His Departure from Belmont.

["Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part."

From these words, and from what you know of the prince's character, write a sketch of his life after leaving Belmont.]

53. Helping Lorenzo Plan for the Masque.

[This may be told by Salarino to Antonio, or by Lorenzo to Jessica in the garden at Belmont.]

54. Lorenzo and Jessica at Genoa.

["Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats."]

55. Shylock's Turquoise Ring.

["Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." Some can tell the story of this precious ring up to the moment it was given away by Jessica for a monkey; others can tell of its subsequent adventures. Did it, for instance, ever get into Shylock's possession again? The turquoise may tell this as an autobiography.]

56. Jessica's Monkey.

[The story of her strange purchase and what became of it.]

57. The Signing of the Bond.

["Meet me forthwith at the notary's;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight."]

58. Bassanio spends His Borrowed Ducats.

[Gratiano tells Nerissa of the purchasing of presents and clothes, hiring retainers, equipment, etc.]

59. The Departure of Bassanio for Belmont.

[Read again II, 8, 35–49, and then describe the scene with further details of your own.]

Subjects for Compositions.

60. Bassanio's Arrival at Belmont.

[Tell the story of Bassanio's arrival with Gratiano and his train, and the reception given them by Portia. Contrast this with the arrival of Morocco and Arragon as told in the play.]

61. Portia's Girlhood.

[Read again III, 2, 159–165, and then give a sketch of Portia's life up to the time she is won by Bassanio. Look up Mrs. Cowden Clarke's "Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines."]

62. Portia's Song.

[The story of the song, "Tell me where is Fancy bred"; what it suggests; how Portia happened to have it handy; how Bassanio listened to it, etc.]

63. Bassanio chooses the Golden Casket.

[Imagine what would have happened had Bassanio failed in his choice.]

64. Salerio's News.

[Read III, 2, 230–239, and then write an account of what has happened in Venice since Bassanio left.]

65. Balthazar's Interview with Dr. Bellario.

[This may well be written in dialogue form. See III, 2, 45–55.]

66. The Journey of Portia and Nerissa to Venice.

[Their conversation, plans, meeting with Balthazar at the tranect, etc.]

67. The Court Room in Venice.

[Describe the scene of the trial, as you imagine it, giving exact positions of the various characters, as though you were a stage-director.]

68. Portia's Arguments Answered.

[Put into Shylock's mouth your own answers to Portia's quibble about the blood and the exact pound of flesh.]

69. Shylock takes His Pound of Flesh.

[In IV, 1, 329, Portia says to Shylock, "Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture." Imagine the scene and actions of those present, including Portia, had Shylock, driven to desperation, rushed upon Antonio to do as she commanded.]

70. Shylock returns from the Trial.

["I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it."

Picture for us the return to his house and the signing of the deed.]

71. Nerissa gets Gratiano's Ring.

[Read again IV, 2, 13–20. Write this in dialogue form like a scene in the play.]

72. The Return of Antonio's Ships.

[Explain the earlier report of their loss, and tell how Portia found out about their safe arrival in port.]

73. Portia and Nerissa Explain.

["Let us go in . . .
And we will answer all things faithfully."

The scene of this explanation may be at Portia's dinner-table the next day. Make it dramatic, and do not have Portia do all the talking.]

74. Shylock after the Trial.

[Did he really become a Christian? Did he forgive Jessica? How did he live? Did he seek revenge? This offers a splendid field for the imagination.]

75. Shylock's Revenge.

[Imagine some plausible way in which Shylock was revenged for his wrongs.]

76. A Visit to Belmont Ten Years After.